OTHER HANDS

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EDITORIAL: THREE IS COMPANY

In the editorial for July, I expressed my hope that our next issue would be bigger, and it seems that I have gotten my wish. Although we are still by no means over the financial hurdle yet, *Other Hands* has been picking up speed during the summer, both in terms of writers and subscribers. Welcome to *OH* 3!

Besides offering all of our usual fare, there are two ways in which this issue represents significant progress toward our goals as a gaming journal. From its conception, *Other Hands* has aimed to provide a forum of communication between the authors, audience, and publishers of Tolkien-related role-playing games. Three of the many contributions to the present issue have advanced us in this direction.

James Owen of the Oxford Tolkien Society has offered an engaging response to Pete Fenlon's open letter (written on behalf of ICE to our readers — sec *OH* 1: 3—6). James' comments are those of a long-time *Rolemaster* player, and we are hoping to see more from him in future issues. His extensive training in the field of metallurgy makes him well qualified to say a thing or two about forging technology in Middle-earth.

Moving across the English Channel, we received a letter of great interest from Eduardo Martinez Santamaria (sec pg. 2), who has announced the formation of a "rolcplaying game commission" within the Sociedad Tolkien Espanola. This group seeks to establish contact through *Other Hands* with individuals or groups who are interested in Middle-earth gaming. They are also involved in customizing the *MERP* rule system to suit their tastes, and I have encouraged them to submit any of their ideas to our journal.

Finally, as the module-writing process continues apace for *The Kin-strife, Umbar,* and *Southern Gondor,* collaborative dialogue between the respective authors of these forthcoming Iron Crown publications has led Gunnar Brolin to present his view on population levels for the Dunadan rcalms-in-exile. Gunnar is a man of many talents (one of these being demographics), and he is a contributing author to both the *Kinstrife* and *Southern Gondor* projects. Jason Beresford, author-to-be of the revised *Umbar* module, has written a brief response to Gunnar's views, especially as they relate to the region of Umbar.

Because both of these authors offer population statistics which are at variance with those found in the recently published *Northwestern Middle-earth Gazetteer* (see review on pgs. 26—27), we have decided to present their respective arguments in these pages for further consideration and discussion by both you, the reader, and Jessica Ney of Iron Crown, who is responsible for the development of the *MEKP* line. The purpose of this deliberation process is to come to some degree of consensus on this matter, so that these and future modules will not contain conflicting figures. In this way, we hope that *Other Hands* will

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be able to help facilitate constructive dialogue on topics of relevance to Middle-earth gamers.

The second way in which the present issue represents progress toward our stated goals is in our aim to offer *practical* materials for the Middle-earth player or referee. Much of the stuff in *OH* 1 and 2, while no doubt of interest to many of our readers, was less directly applicable to the contingencies of role-playing. There *is* a place in *Other Hands* for these more general Middlc-carth-related topics; but we want to balance this out with more "immediately usable" materials.

Our ultimate goal is, of course, to publish actual adventure scenarios within these pages. Although we have not achieved that goal in this issue, we read Tolkien Enterprises' continued silence on this matter as tacit consent to proceed with our plans to include at least one adventure in each issue of *Other Hands,* beginning with issue four in January (see *OH* 2: 1 for the context of this discussion). We hope that this announcement will encourage some of you to send us you unpublished adventures.

OH 3 nevertheless contains a few pieces which are of practical interest. Tim Innes, one of the *Southern Gondor* authors, has given us an extensive essay on the Drughu (i.e., Drúedain, Woses), which includes *RuneQuest* stats for both the Drughu themselves and the infamous "Pûkel-mcn." Finally, in preparation for an adventure which may appear in a future issue, I have written an interpretive article on the enigmatic Queen Berúthiel and her mysterious cats.

To wind things up, we have a programmatic essay by Andrew McMurry (also of the Oxford Tolkien Society) on the principles governing the use of magic in Middle-earth, which follows closely on the heels of Chris Pheby's contribution to *OH 1*. And we have another short piece from Anders on — of all things — Scandinavian influences on the Orkish-English dictionary in the *Empire of the Witch-king* module. Finally, we have added a new feature, "Frontlines," which will bring together all of the latest gossip and news about Middle-earth gaming which fails to get into the letters column or this editorial. Anyone with information about anything is encouraged to give report for our fellow readers.

Before closing, I should bring everyone up to date on the problem of European distribution. We are still working with the possibility of arranging for *Other Hands* to be produced and distributed independently in the EEC, so as to reduce the overseas mailing — and, hence, subscription — cost for our readers outside the USA. For the present, however, it will be possible to purchase individual issues of our journal through Myth of Adventures: Verlag fur phantastische Medien, Berner Weg 24, D— 67069 Ludwigshafen, Germany. We are also hoping to get Bilbo's Bookshop Bath to stock us, but have not yet received a reply from them.

A final matter before signing off. I am contemplating including an address roster of *Other Hands* subscribers in the upcoming January issue, so as to facilitate communication between our readers. Please let me know if for any reason you would *not* care to be included in this list. Well, that's all for now— talk to you in three months!

Chris Seeman, 15 October, 1993

COMMUNICATIONS

This letters column is intended to function as a forum of communication between subscribers of Other Hands. *It can also serve as a place for readers to comment on various topics of interest mtliout ivriting ajull article. This is not, in fact, a new feature of* Other Hands — *we have simply not received any letters until now. So start writing!*

Dear friend:

My name is Eduardo Martinez Santamaria, and I am a member of the roleplaying game commission of the Sociedad Tolkien Espanola.... I write to you regarding your announcement of *Other Hands* in our society bulletin some months ago. Our commission intends to offer revisions of the *Middle-earth Role Playing* system in order to bring it into greater fidelity with Tolkien's books. We are therefore very interested in exchanging ideas with other groups who have similar interests.

As Iron Crown Enterprises is also located in the USA, we believe that *Other Hands* will be very useful to Tolkien fans and gamers all over the world as a vehicle for keeping people like us in contact. Congratulations for the idea!

We would be grateful if you could send us further information about subscription prices, methods of payment, etc., as well as reports about other interested groups. And, of course, if there is something we can do, just tell us.

Eduardo Martinez Santamaría
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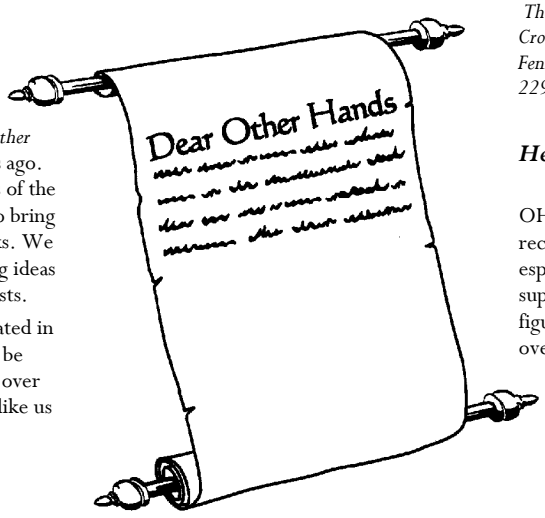

[Ed. — One of the principal functions of Other Hands *is to provide an opportunity for one's rule suggestions to be published; so we welcome and encourage your group to submit these ideas for open discussion among Middle-earth gamers.* We *also hope that other individuals or groups involved in projects such as your own throughout the world will send us reports on their progress to this letters column, so that we can develop an active network of interested gamers. Those wishing to communicate their ideas to Iron Crown directly should address their inquiries to Pete Fenlon: ICE, PO Box 1605, Charlottesville, VA 22902, USA.]*

Hello Chris,

...When you review the *NWME Gazetteer* in OH #3, you may point out that Gondor has received unrealistically low population figures, especially when compared with the army sizes supplied for Mordor in *Gorgoroth.* With these figures, Sauron would likely have little problem overrunning Gondor.

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FRONTLINES

As explained in this issue's editorial, the purpose of "Frontlines" is to keep our readers abreast on the latest developments in the Middle-earth gaming scene worldwide. Since many of the contributors to this issue are involved in the writing of ICE modules, "Frontlines" will be including regular reports on their progress. This column is, however, by no means limited to this topic and is available for anyone with something interesting to tell us.

Should the overlap between "Frontlines" and "Communications" obviate the neede for two separate features, we will probably end up merging them. At present, the main difference is that "Communications" remains a letters column where it is our readers who are doing the writing, wheras "Frontlines" is my own synthesis of information accumulated over the last three months preceding the issue in which it appears.

So what is the latest news on the modules? *The Kin-strife* (now subtitled *The Usurper's Reign*) is still going through the editing process; but it is also acquiring some additional adventures (which, we anticipate, will bring the grand total to twenty-one). The current focus is on bringing Gunnar Brolin's Umbar chapter into accord with some of the major revisions in the city/haven layout currently proposed by Jason Beresford. The many adventures in this campaign module are now being playtested by members of Taruithorn (the Oxford Tolkien Society), who will be sending us their reactions and suggestions in the near future [Liz, this means you!].

The *Southern Gondor* "realm" module, which will be covering everything north of Umbar and south of the Ered Nimrais, is beginning to take shape. The first draft of the Lamedon chapter has been received, and collaborative work on three campaign-length adventures is now underway. One of these adventures, entitled "Silmarien's Crown," was recently playtested (in much abridged form) a few weeks ago at the west-coast gaming convention, Pacificon, where it was a great success. The other two campaigns will be treating the Gondor-Corsair conflict and Wainridcr wars respectively. The general intention of the *Kin-strife* and *Southern Gondor* modules is to cover the periods of 1437-1448 and 1448-2050, whereas Jason Beresford's *Umbar* realm module will be covering the entire history of that haven (although it will still be focusing on the years of the 17th century as did the original 1982 publication). I know less about the current status of Jason's work, but have read some very impressive segments of it in progress. He, Gunnar, and Anders Blixt are engaged in an ongoing discussion not only about population levels, but about naval organization and ship design (both of which are understandably overlapping concerns).

A final bit of general news. When the idea of *Other Hands* was first conceived last August at the Tolkien Centenary conference in Oxford, there was much talk about the formation of special interest groups within the Tolkien Society of England. Thus far, no role-playing special interest group has emerged (though, I believe, there are many gamers in the TS who might be interested in forming one). Once word of our journal gets out among them, perhaps they will be encouraged to form one. In fact, even as we speak, *OH* 1 and 2 are being sold at this year's Oxonmoot by James Owen and Andrew McMurry. Let's wish them good luck in finding new subscribers!

REPORTER: CHRIS SEEMAN

THOUGHTS ON THE POPULATION OF GONDOR AND ARNOR

Gunnar Brolin:
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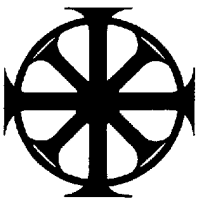
The reader of The Lord of the Rings *is prsented with a rather curious demographic picture of northwestern Middle-earth. The Shire, for example, is filled with a large (one might even say "swarming") number of contented hobbit farmers. A few days travel away is the town of Bree with its outlying villages. By contrast, the rest of Eriador appears desolate (at least north of Dunland).*

Frodo and Sam travel through a deserted Forithilien. Harondor, too, is named "a desert land" on Tolkien's maps, and the great steppes of Rhovanion seem devoid of habitation at this time. Signs of villages or small towns — or any population at all — are absent from Gandalf and Pippin's ride through Anórien, until they reach the Pelennor fields.

The overall picture we are given is of quite a small human population concentrated in a few selected spots. But if we assume that the humans of the Third Age had the same instincts and habits as those of our own — and if we allow the authors of The Red Book of Wcstmarch *some poetic license — and instead attempt to deduce the population of Gondor and Arnor on the basis of European analogies, we may arrive at slightly different numbers.*



A Method of Comparison

An exact comparison is hindered by the fact that, whereas the Dúnadan realms in Endor display extreme demographic stability, European society (despite the fall of the Roman Empire) actually underwent an increase in population beginning in late Antiquity. A low nativity, just barely equaling the mortality, if anything seems to have led to a decline in population throughout the three millennia of the Third Age. By contrast, the population of Europe rose by at least one fifth during the first millennium of the Common Era, tripled in the face of the Black Death between 1000 and 1500 AD,[1] and probably quadrupled over the two thousand years between 1000 BC and 1000 AD.

The nearly non-existent growth of the Dúnadan realms may be explained to some extent by die conspicuous absence of any references in *The Lord of the Kings* to developments in subsistence techniques. Population growth is in many ways connected to the growth of technology which, prior to the Industrial Revolution, was usually focused in one way or another on the agricultural sector — better technology meant a larger yield and more mouths to be fed. The apparent absence of such developments as late as the Fourth Age limited the possibilities for feeding a larger population.

That population levels will oscillate around the productive capacity of land is doubly true for peripheral territories of the Dunadan realms, where less advanced agricultural methods further limit the number of inhabitants which can be supported. Although both social and natural causes may contribute to long periods of demographic stability for such regions, famine (or at least scarcity of food) may result whenever the population rises in excess of its natural limits. Death by starvation or undernourishment claims a portion of this excess population, while others emigrate for richer areas. The level of agricultural productivity also limits family size — since a farm cannot support more than a certain number of people, there is a tendency to have fewer children. This tendency is also a result of the obstacles existing for younger generations to establish their own households, which makes for late marriages and therefore fewer progeny.

Perhaps the best method for arriving at a believable population estimate would be to multiply the size of the region in question by a corresponding population density, which may in turn be reached at by comparison with Europe in the Roman (200 AD) and Medieval periods (1300 AD).[2] Roman Europe had an average density of 10 inhabitants per square kilometer (25 per square mile), the highest being in the Italian peninsula with some 20—25 inhabitants per square kilometer. In the Medieval period the average density was 220 inhabitants per square kilometer with the highest in Italy and Belgium, both coming close to 40 inhabitants per square kilometer.

Gondor

Gondor probably had its largest population around TA 1400. Up to at least the reign of Atanatar Alcarin, the population must have been growing, and not only due to conquest. The Kin-strife (1432-1448) must have had some effect on the population, but the big fall was the Plague which hit Gondor in 1636. Due to several reasons rather difficult to explain, the transformation of Gondor from an expansive mercantile culture under the Ship-kings to a feudalistic society under the Stewards led to a decrease in the level of population which could be supported.

The central Anduin valley, with the provinces of Anórien, Ithilien and Lebennin, must have had the highest population density in

Gondor in T.A. 1400	Density	Size	Population
The Anduin Valley	30	16,000	5,000,000
Belfalas	20	50,000	1,000,000
Lamedon	10	20,000	200,000
Anfalas	10	100,000	1,000,000
Harondor, inhabitable area	10	40,000	400,000
Harondor, inland	1	100,000	100,000
Umbar, the peninsula	30	20,000	600,000
Umbar, habitable area along coast	5	20,000	100,000
Calenardhon, mostly steppe	2	160,000	300,000
Enedwaith (southern Eriador)	2-5	180,000	500,000
Gondor, total	c.11	850,000	9,200,000

Gondor and probably in most of Endor. Putting it at 30 inhabitants per square kilometer in 1400 seems to be a fair estimation. This region is nearly square (each side being about 400 kilometers/250 miles long), containing a total area of some 160,000 square kilometers and a population of some 5,000,000 inhabitants.

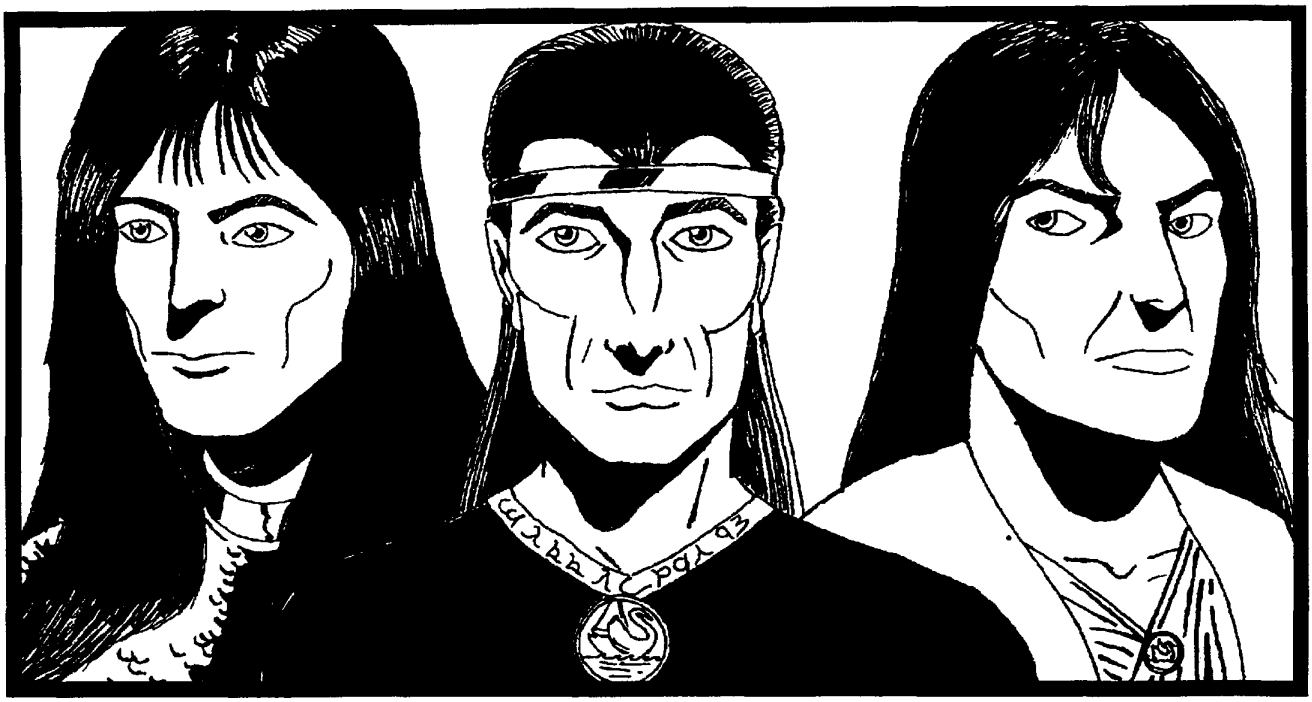
The second most densely inhabited region in Gondor would be Belfalas (Dor-en-Ernil), with some 20 inhabitants per square kilometer and a size of about 50,000 square kilometers and a population of 1,000,000 persons. Further out from the central area the density will be even lower at 10 or 5 persons per square kilometer. The following table gives a population which is believable.

The numbers above describe Gondor as it was when it was at its greatest extent. In the days of Isildur and Anárion, the realm was smaller both in size and in population, even if the Anduin valley still possessed one of the highest population densities of those parts of Endor. The kings probably only exercised substantive control over Ithilicn, Anórien, Lebennin and Belfalas. With an estimated density of 20 per square kilometer in the first three and 15 in the last, the total population would be around 3.5 to 4 million people. Peripheral territories like Anfalas, Harondor and Enedwaith would probably have a density not much lower than in the 1400's (around 5 to 8 inhabitants per square kilometer).

At the other end of the Third Age, Gondor would also be smaller than in the 1400's. The loss of Umbar, Harondor, Calenardhon and Enedwaith, and the near emptying of Ithilien due to Sauron's control of Minas Morgul (Minas Ithil), combined with the primary cause of demographic decline — the plague of 1636 — to leave the three central provinces with probably around 3,000,000 inhabitants.[4] Around half of the population in the Anduin valley (and about one third in more distant areas like Anfalas) died of the Plague, and subsequent opportunities for recuperation and growth were kept at a very low level by constant border warfare and raiding from the Corsairs of Umbar. Belfalas and the territories west of it would have slightly less than in 1450, giving a total population of around 5,000,000 inhabitants in all of Gondor at the time of the War of the Ring.

ARNOR

The population of Arnor is much harder to evaluate, because less is known of the land as such and of the Dúnadan realm that occupied it. The mouth of the Gwathló, the northern end of Ercd Luin and the sources of the Bruincn form a triangle of land whose corners give us a total area of about 450,000 square kilometers. Besides Annúminas, Fornost, Tharbad and Bree, no human towns are known. The area is probably rural in character with a correspondingly low population density. If there are any areas with a higher density they would be the lower river valleys of the Gwathló, the Baranduin and the Lhûn, and the area around Lake Evendim. In general, the population density will decrease as one moves eastwards.



Arnor reached the height of its population much earlier than Gondor (probably around the beginning of the Third Age or in the coming few hundred years). Since the land is very rural in character, the highest density will probably not be much above 15 inhabitants per square kilometer with an average around 10. This will give a total population of around 5,000,000 people.[5] Since wealth in a preindustrial society is very much dependent upon the extent of available agricultural labor, Elendil's choice to leave Gondor to his sons, or Isildur's decision to go north when he succeeded his father and left his nephew to rule the south, may reflect the perceived strength of this agricultural base.

The population of Arnor was probably quite stable until the division of the realm in TA 861, after which time we must factor in a situation of endemic warfare between the contending royal lines, which precipitated a slow decline in population. Since the area around Lake Evendim and the valley of the Lhûn comprised the central part of the old realm, Arthedain was the largest of the three successor realms. The kings of Cardolan controlled the second largest territory between the valleys of the Baranduin and the Gwathlo, while Rhudaur would be the smallest. A fair estimation would probably be that Arthedain controlled about half (approximately 2.5 million), Cardolan a third (about 1.6 million), and Rhudaur one sixth of the old population of Eriador (some 0.8 million). As Gondor reached its zenith during the 15th century, the population of Arnor may have fallen one quarter to one third of its highest (or around 3.5 million throughout Eriador).

Even though the several wars between the three successor kingdoms would have had a detrimental effect on the population of Arnor, the rise of Angmar must have been the chief cause of its decline. Rhudaur was subdued at an early stage; as a result probably all remaining Dúnedain and a large number of other people fled or were killed. The collapse of Cardolan followed with the Witch-king's invasion in 1409, which restricted the size of the population to an even lower ebb. Arthedain alone must have been heavily bled by constant raiding from Angmar and its allies in now-occupied Rhudaur. Even if it wasn't as severe as in Gondor the Great Plague was probably responsible for the death of between one quarter to one fifth of the population. A general worsening of the climate further reduced the productive capacity of the land.

In 1409, Arthedain could have had a population of slightly less than 2,000,000, while Cardolan could not have been more than half of that. When Arthedain finally fell to the onslaught by Angmar in 1975, its population could have been about 1.0—1.5 million, with the territory of former Cardolan supporting a population of only 0.6—0.8 million and former Rhudaur about 0.3-0.4 million. All of Eriador would probably have had a population of some 2—2.5 million inhabitants (or around 5 persons per square kilometer).

After the fall of Arthedain and the following collapse of Angmar, there was relative peace in Eriador (with the minor problem of Trolls living in the Ettenmoors and Orcs raiding from the Misty Mountains). The population may therefore have risen from the nadir of 1975, although the absence of any realm organized to protect the people and encourage agricultural development would have lowered the rate of population growth. It can't have reached the same level by the end of the Third Age that it possessed at the beginning. An estimation of around 3.5—4 million in habitants is probably fair, or the same amount as when the attacks from Angmar began

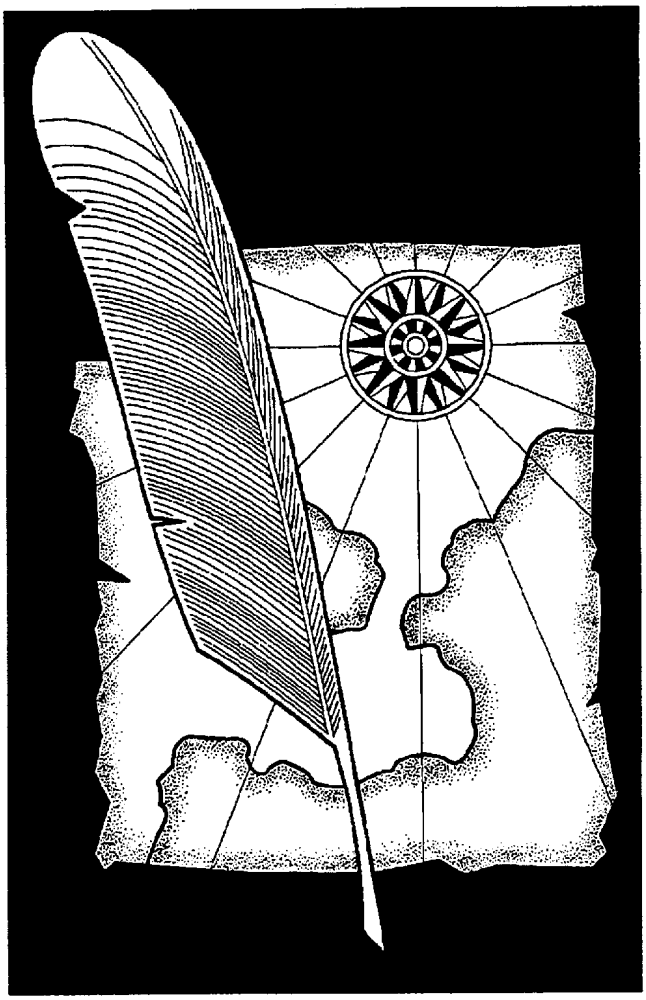
URBANIZATION

Few towns or cities are mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings.* Of the four major settlements in Eriador outside the Shire — Fornost, Annuminas, Brcc, and Tharbad — only two were not deserted by the end of the Third Age. Another five within the borders of Gondor (including Minas Ithil/Minas Morgul), and the towns of Umbar and Edoras leave us with a total of ten major settlements in the entirety of northwestern Endor (this area would have had a population of nearly 13,000,000 people in the 1 Sth century TA).

Although the *number* of cities and towns of medieval Europe was comparable to that of modern Europe, their relative *size* was much smaller. During the 13th century, there were only about ten cities with a population of more than 20,000 inhabitants, and at least half of these were concentrated in Italy — Venice, Milan, Florence (perhaps), Rome, Naples and Palermo; outside the Italian peninsula Paris, Barcelona and Constantinople could have reached a comparable size. The vast majority of settlements were much smaller (in the range of perhaps 1,000-4,000 inhabitants) and functioned as market centers for the surrounding countryside. Such market-towns came into existence at natural meeting points like river-crossings, landings, harbors and crossroads.

The degree of urbanization was therefore much lower than today. It is not uncommon for the industrialized countries of western Europe of today to be almost wholly urban in character (as high as 90-95%). But the agrarian society of late antiquity or the middle ages could not have risen above one urban settlement out of every ten or twelve (a degree of about 8—10%). Italy and medieval Flanders could have had a higher level, from one in eight to one in six (12-17%), but eastern Europe could have had a degree as low as one in twenty (5%) or even less.

Were we to apply these same percentages to Endor, we would find a rather high degree of urbanization. On the assumption that there must have existed a large number of small towns never worth mentioning, Gondor in the 15th century TA could have had close to a million town-dwellers alone (and these all living far from the few cities we know by name). In Lebennin, for instance, we hear of only one city — Pelargir — but if the province could bave supported a total population of 1.8 million in 1400 (of which some 200,000-250,000 could have lived in an urban setting), then even were we to assume a population of 40,000-50,000 for Pelargir, we would still have 150,000-200,000 to settle in other urban communities. With an average size of 4,000—5,000 inhabitants (which probably is far too large), we would have some 30—50 smaller towns scattered across the countryside. Considering the size of the province, these would probably be around a day's walk between each other (which would be comparable to medieval Italy). By contrast, if Anfalas had a population of 1 million people, the degree of urbanization would be lower (with some 50,000-70,000 living in towns). Assuming a smaller-sized town of 2,000-3,000 inhabitants, we would still find at least 25—35 towns in the territory.



The degree of urbanization in rural Eriador probably never rose to the same level as the Anduin valley. Still, Arnor is assumed to have had a population of 5 million at its height, then at least 300,000-400,000 may have lived in towns (which means that there must be not less than 100 towns in the three realms combined). Because it isn't common to have a wholly deserted town in an agricultural area — a small number of people would still be living there — and because it is difficult to distinguish these small towns from larger neighboring villages, we can assume most of these towns would still be standing at the end of the Third Age, even if they were of a smaller size than at the time of their origin.

FOOTNOTES

1. The population of China also tripled in the same time span, despite the Mongolian invasion of the 13th and 14th centuries (which probably caused more deaths than the Black Death in Europe).

2. (i.e., before the Black Death) "Europe" here excludes Scandinavia and the former Soviet republics, due to the very low population density in these areas. All measures arc given according to the metric system. A square mile is about 2.5 square kilometers.

3. Umbar is a special case, since the area immediately around the town (the peninsula) must be a highly developed arable area on a par with central Gondor when it comes to density. The land outside the peninsula is arid or even desert and has a very low density estimated at about 5 per square kilometer along the coast (north of the Cuivïerant) and around 1 or even lower in the interior.

4. The Black Death is usually credited for a dramatic drop in the population of Europe. The same level couldn't have been reached again for some two hundred years. J.R.R. Tolkien probably worked with the same assumption concerning the effects of the Great Plague in 1636. However, Europe would have recovered from the effects of the Black Death in one or two generations. The real reason why it took so long to recover was that the Black Death was only the first in a long row of plagues returning to different areas of Europe every 10-20 years, thus cutting the growth. In Endor, the population growth must be much lower in general and one single plague will then be more dramatic and have more farther-reaching effects. Still, the effects seem to be too large.

5. The South-kingdom will at the same time have less than 4,000,000 (see above).

A RESPONSE TO "THOUGHTS ON THE POPULATION OF GONDOR AND ARNOR"

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Several regions Gunnar Brolin assigns populations to seem to be overpopulated when compared against both the writings of Professor Tolkien and other regions detailed by Gunnar. The areas that stand out in particular are Anfalas and Amor. Additionally, the population of Umbar requires some discussion. As I am revising the old Umbar *module, I naturally have my own thoughts on Umbar's population levels. But before I enter my discussion, I wish to commend Gunnar for an excellent and thought-provoking article. His analysis of Gondor's population is very valuable and, I feel, highly accurate.*

Anfalas

Anfalas and the Enedwaith are the territories farthest removed from the population centers of Gondor. As such, one might expect that they would have a lower population density than lands closer to the center of the kingdom, such as Lamedon and the coasts of Harondor. With a population density of 2—5, the Enedwaith compares favorably with a population density of 10 for both Lamedon and the coasts of Harondor. Gunnar, however, has given Anfalas a population density of 10. This is much too high, barring a strong reason for people to settle this remote corner of the kingdom.

When Gondor's population peaks around TA 1400, a density of 5 would seem appropriate for Anfalas, giving it a peak population of 500,000. At the time of the Last Alliance, Anfalas was not part of Gondor, but many of the native Daen Coentis/Daen Lintis and Drúedain in Gondor might have migrated to Anfalas. Thus its population density and total population would most probably be about the same or slightly less as that in TA 1400. However by the time of the War of the Ring, Gondor's population should have consolidated somewhat due to the external threats to the kingdom, with people from the most remote corners of the kingdom migrating back to the core provinces. A 25% to 50% drop from Anfalas' peak population would not be excessive and an actual population of around 350,000 seems appropriate.

Arnor

Arnor is a much harder region to evaluate. What little information there is about it is primarily from the late Third Age. But there is some information that can be gleaned from *The Silmarillion* regarding the relative population levels of Gondor and Arnor at the time of Elendil, Isildur, and Anarion. Upon their arrival, Tolkien makes specific reference to the existing Númenorean colony that becomes the kingdom of Gondor and to the many people that dwell there. This is in sharp contrast to Arnor, where no such mention is made. Thus at the beginning of the Third Age, one can assume that Arnor had the lesser population. Furthermore, Tolkien illustrates the works of the Númenoreans/Dúnedain of Gondor in detail, yet provides only the barest sketch about those in Arnor. This reinforces the view that Arnor's population was much less than that of Gondor. Yet at this time, Gunnar gives the population of Arnor as approximately 5,000,000, while giving Gondor a population of only 3.5 to 4 million. I propose that Arnor's population is not more than 2,000,000 at its height, at the start of the Third Age.

One can surmise (based on the general lack of information about the population of region and the sense Tolkien gives of the region's abandonment) that Arnor is largely unpopulated at the time of the War of the Ring. Additionally, the lack of any large, inhabited settlements being mentioned (other than Bree and the Shire) implies that there are no large concentrations of people. Gunnar suggests a population of around 3.5 to 4 million. If one were to assume that small villages predominate, an average village (including outlying farms) might number 1,000 inhabitants, and that the 3,500 to 4,000 villages are evenly spread over the 450,000 square kilometers of Arnor, then there would be one village every roughly every 10 to 11 kilometers (6.5 to 7 miles). There is no indication that any settlements outside of the Shire are anywhere near that close together. If one assumes an uneven distribution of settlements, then there must be areas of large population concentrations, and the only one mentioned by Tolkien is the Shire. Given this, at the time of the War of the Ring, a population of a million seems reasonable.

With an area of 450,000 square kilometers, Arnor is always sparsely populated. However her people are not scattered evenly. Tolkien is careful to point out that settlement in the kingdom is principally along the courses of the rivers Lhun and Baranduin. Additional settlements were around Lake Evendim, Fornost, Tharbad, in Cardolan, and "in the hills of Rhudaur." It is not unreasonable to assume that settlement beyond these areas was limited. Thus, much of the land in Arnor was sparsely settled or unsettled wilderness.The settled territory of Arnor is best evaluated by the regions (later kingdoms) of Arthedain, Cardolan, and Rhudaur. The rivers Lhun and the upper Baranduin, Lake Evendim, and Fornost all lie within Arthedain and most of her people live there. The land later called "The Shire" by the Hobbits lies along the western bank of the middle Baranduin and would also be settled (though to a lesser degree than elsewhere in Arthcdain).As the lower Baranduin forms the western border of Cardolan, one can presume that the eastern bank is one of the principle settlements of that region. The Gwathlo forms the eastern border of Cardolan. The city of Tharbad straddles the river and considerable settlement should exist along the western bank, both up and downstream of the city. Additional settlements can be expected along the coast of Minhiriath.Rhudaur is the hardest region of Arnor to evaluate. Clues about human settlement can be deduced from the settlement patterns of the Hobbits who crossed the Misty Mountains. After crossing the mountains, the Stoors followed the Bruinen downstream and settled for a time along the riverbanks in the En Egladil between the Mithcithel and Bruinen in southern Rhudaur. If the Stoors found this portion of Rhudaur to their liking, it is probable that the riverbanks in En Egladil and Northern Eregion were also extensively settled by Rhudaur's people, though most were gone by the time the Stoors arrived
Other settlements in Rhudaur would be in the En Eredoriath, the Oiolad, and the Pinnath Tereg, primarily concentrated along the Mithcithel and her tributaries. The table above gives the size (in square kilometers), population density (inhabitants per square kilometer), and total population of each region described above at the time of Arnor's peak population The total area given below is only 140,000 square kilometers, or roughly one third the total area of Arnor, and the population equals 1.65 million. If one assumes that the remaining 310,000 square kilometers of territory have an average density of 1, then Arnor has a total population of 2,000,000, with Arthedain having approximately 1,000,000, Cardolan having 700,000, and Rhudaur having 300,000. This gives Arnor an average population density of slightly less than 5 at its height.

Arnor (TA 1)*	Density	Size	Population
Lhûn (A)	20	5,000	100,000
Upper Baranduin (A)	25	15,000	375,000
The Shire, Baranduin West Bank (A)	15	10,000	150,000
The Shire (A)	5	25,000	125,000
Lake Evendim (A)	25	5,000	125,000
Fornost (A)	10	5,000	50,000
Middle & Lower Baranduin, East Bank (C)	15	15,000	225,000
Gwathló, West Bank (0	15	15,000	225,000
Minhiriath, Coast (C)	5	10,000	50,000
En Egladil, River Banks (R)	10	5,000	50,000
Central En Egladil (R)	5	10,000	50,000
Northern Eregion, Bruinen River Bank (R)	10	5,000	50,000
En Eredoriath (R)	5	3,000	15,000
Oiolad (R)	5	7,000	35,000
Pinnath Tereg (R)	5	5,000	25000

*(A) = Arthedain, (C) = Cardolan, (R) = Rhudaur

These population numbers should be good up until TA 861, when Arnor is divided. After then, the population of all three kingdoms begins to decrease. The population of Arthedain remains the most stable, while the population of Rhudaur the is most unstable. Rhudaur is largely abandoned after the Great Plague and most in Cardolan have either fled to Arthedain and Gondor or died. Arthedain remains largely intact, thanks to the influx of refugees from Cardolan, though the Shire had been abandoned soon after the Witch-king's invasion and was only resettled by the Hobbits in TA 1601.

After the fall of Arthedain to Angmar, the total population of Arnor probably numbers not more than 500,000, including the sizable population of Hobbits in the Shire. Roughly 100,000 each live in the Shire and in Cardolan, while the remainder dwell in Arthedain. Rhudaur is completely abandoned. The population of Arnor slowly increases during the remainder of the Third Age, rising to a million by the time of the War of the Ring. The greatest growth occurs in the Shire and in southern Cardolan

Umbar

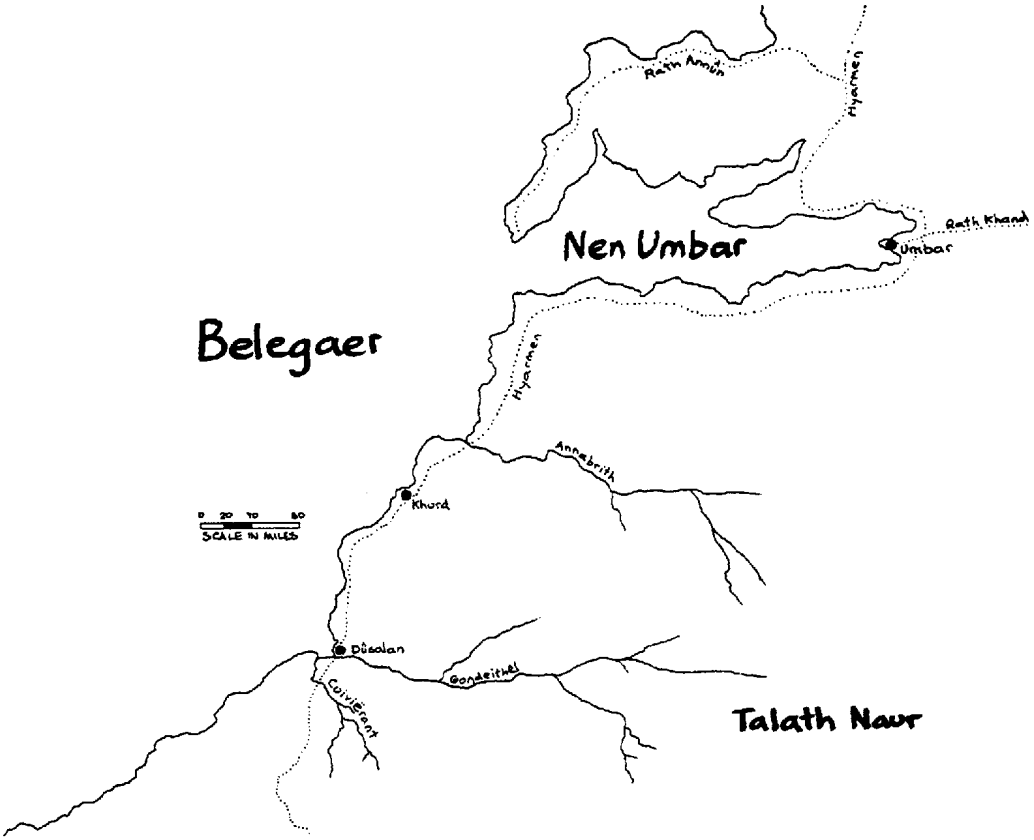
When the Númenorcans established their colony at Umbar, they laid claim only to the lands immediately surrounding the Bay. In SA 2280, Umbar was fortified and the borders of the colony were formalized: the Annabrith to the south; the coast and Rath Annun to the north; and ten leagues (30 miles) cast of the junction of the Rath Khand and the Hyarmen. The colony encompassed a total area of approximately 75,000 square kilometers.

All die lands between the Nen Belfalas and the Hyarmen north of the Rath Annun and south of the Harnen were were controlled by Gondor and administered in Umbar by the Captain of the Haven.

However, the people of Umbar consider only the lands within the boundaries established in SA 2280 to be part of Umbar, and any other lands they might controlled and the people in them were considered to be separate.

At all times in Umbar's history, the bulk of her population has lived along the coasts of the Nen Umbar. Additional major settlements are along the lower Annabrith and the coast between the Annabrith and the Nen Umbar. The northern coast and the hills of Umbar's northern peninsula are inhabited, but lightly settled. The remaining lands are virtually uninhabited

The population of Umbar peaks twice: just before the Great Plague and at the time of the War of the Ring. It is also at a minimum twice: just after the sinking of Númenor and in TA 930 (due to a civil war). The Great Plague, though not as devastating to Umbar as to Gondor, still resulted in the death of one fifth of its population. After the Plague, population levels were static until TA 1810, when Gondor seized Umbar for a second time and many fled to



Umbar (TA 1635/3000)*	Density	Size	Population
Coasts, Nen Umbar	40	9,000	360,000
Coasts, Nen Umbar/Annabrith	30	2,000	60,000
Lower Annabrith River Valley	30	1,000	30,000
Northern Peninsula	10	15,000	150,000
Other	<1	48,000	25,000
Total Population			625,000

Umbar (SA 3320/TA 930)	Density	Size	Population
Coasts, Nen Umbar	15	9,000	225,000
Coasts, Nen Umbar/Annabrith	10	2,000	20,000
Lower Annabrith River Valley	5	1,000	5,000
Northern Peninsula	5	15,000	75,000
Other	<1	48,000	25,000
Total Population			350,000

* In TA 1400, when Gondor's population peaks, Umbar's population numbers only 450,000. The influx of Castamir's followers in TA 1448 boosts Umbar's population to 500,000.

Umbarian-held territories along the Harnen. After Gondor loses Umbar in TA 1940, its population grows slowly until the War of the Ring. The slow growth is due to many leaving Umbar proper as Umbar gains new territories as it expands into Harad and as the alliance with Sauron grows. The tables below give Umbar's population at its maximum of 625,000 inhabitants and minimum of 350,000.

Dûsalan

To the south of Umbar, at the mouth of the Gondeithel, is the city-state of Dûsalan. It was founded by the Númenóreans as a logistics base for construction of the Hyarmen over the Talath Naur. After the road was finished, many remained behind. Since its founding, Dûsalan has always been independent from Umbar and it remains independent for all of the Third Age and into the Fourth. Dûsalan claims the Gondeithel river valley, the Cuiviërant river valley, the coast north to the ruins of Khurd, and the coast for ten leagues (30 miles) west of the lower Cuiviërant.

Dûsalan's territory encompasses a total area of 11,000 square kilometers and its population grows slowly and steadily for all of the Third Age, stumbling only due to the Great Plague in which one tenth of the population died. At the start of the Third Age, Dûsalan had only 50,000 inhabitants. Just before the Great Plague struck, its population doubles to 100,000, 10,000 of which later succumb to the Plague. Growth after the plague is slower than before, but by the end of the Third Age the population has climbed to 150,000.

DEVELOPING A MAGIC SYSTEM FOR MIDDLE-EARTH ROLE PLAYING

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Thus far, Iron Crown Enterprises has not attempted to produce a magic system for Middle-earth; instead, it has simply taken over the Rolemaster *system. It seems to me that the most inappropriate part of the* MERP *rules is its magic system. In this article I will put forward some ideas for what I think a Middle-earth-specific magic system should be like. Once I get some response, I will try to design such a system in detail.*

Those who read *The Silmarillion* will notice that the use of magic tends to decrease as time goes on, as does the activity of the Ainur. Before the awakening of the Elves, the Valar made much use of their powers, personally shaping the landscape and creating many wonderful things — like the lamps to light die world — which Melkor destroyed. After having struggled against Melkor in person, they appear to have done very little at all, leaving most of the action to the Children of Iluvatar.

My explanation for this is that the Ainur entered Middle-earth with a limited amount of irreplaceable energy, which they used up. The reason that none of the Valar took a part in the overthrow of Sauron in later ages is that none of them had enough energy to spare. The Maiar who came to fight Sauron during the Third Age (the Istari) had similarly to conserve their energy in order to be effective. Mithrandir was sent back with more power after the fight with the Balrog because the Valar thought the risk of expending more energy was worth it in order to remove the greatest remaining pool of energy that the Enemy had. In the Fourth and later ages, neither good nor evil had much magical energy available to intervene directly in the world.

From this it follows that perhaps the Children of Iluvatar, Elves and Men, also have a limited amount of magical energy. But whereas the limited lifespan of Men makes this a peripheral concern, the deathlessncss of the Elves (coeval with the life of the world itself) necessitates that this energy not be used without good cause or in grave need. Although it is unnecessary to expend this energy in the course of everyday life, its presence ennobles those who use it in the creation of beauty. By contrast, the absence of its use leaves certain Elves in a very primitive existence, and subject to a more rapid "fading." Most depart for the West, where they are protected when their energy runs too low for them to defend themselves adequately in Middle-earth.

There are two basic forms of magic-use in Middle-earth. The first is use of one's own energy, which might involve a Channeling song (as used, for instance, by Finrod and Lúthien in *The Silmarillion),* or some other form of battle of wills (as in the case of Gandalf and others' struggle against Sauron in *The Lord of the Rings).* Unless the attack is much stronger than the defense, the result is a stale-mate. It is much easier to defend, than to attack.

In most cases such uses of magic have very simple, direct effects. The only point where we see a complicated effect attempted is when Gandalf tries to magically hold the door to the chamber of Mazarbul against the Balrog in Moria while the Fellowship flees. The time and effort taken up by this allows the Balrog to enter the chamber and thereby more easily direct its attack upon the wizard, which prevents him from completing the effect properly and results in the destruction of the room due to the sudden loss of energy.

The other form of magic in Middle-earth is focused on the use of artifacts, the effects of which are often more subtle than direct use of magic. Such items represent the only means of storing up a complicated effect for use in a hurry, but creating an item to carry out such an effect is even more difficult and energy-consuming than creating the effect. Hence magic items arc rare and precious.

Most magic items of any power were created during the First or Second ages, when there was more energy around. As these items

were made and used by the Ainur (or those High Elves who had been taught by them), very few ever reached the shores of Middle-earth. With the destruction of Beleriand at the close of the First Age, only the Númcnoreans, the Elves of Lindon and Hollin, the Dwarves of Khazad-dûm (and, of course, Sauron), would have retained such items in Middle-earth. Both the destruction of Hollin and the final downfall of Sauron generated widespread departure among the remaining Elves of Lindon, making magic items even more of a rarity. The Númenorean colonies, the few remaining Elven refuges and the Dwarvcn mansions would contain the last remnants of ancient magical power.

Although some might be disappointed at this insistence on the difficulty of finding interesting magic, that is the way Middle-carth was during the Third Age. *AD&D-style* parties, where no self-respecting 5th level character docs not have at least five magic items, would seriously distort a Third Age setting — even in the First Age, magic items were not held in numbers by any but the most powerful. Let us remember how sparingly Gandalf (one of the most powerful beings in Middle-carth during the Third Age) uses magic, even during the climax of his most active period during the War of the Ring.

Neither Gandalf nor Aragorn could confront Sauron directly; but as the heir of Isildur, Aragorn managed to wrest control of the *palantír*. This brings me to the idea of compatible auras. Aragorn had more *right* to use the *palantír* than Sauron did, and therefore Sauron's strength in trying to stop him was lessened. To explain this, and the importance of blood-lines in Middlc-carth, I will introduce the idea of magical *signatures.*

All magical power in Middle-earth is marked by the signature of its user. Magic items are marked by the signature of their maker, and it is easier for people with a similar signature to use an item. The signature of a blood relation is similar to one's own signature, and the degree of similarity depends on the closeness of the relationship.

Residual similarity of signature may also be passed from mentor to pupil, and anyone who has been corrupted by Melkor or any of his servants can be spotted immediately from that signature. There are thus two parts to the signature. One part is inherited, and will remain the same in a given individual. The other part is learned, when one learns to use one's energy. This second part changes, as the learning process never stops. For the Children of Ilúvatar, the use of magic must be learned from somewhere. In origin, all such knowledge comes from the Ainur, for whom the active use of energy is part and parcel to their created nature. The Noldor learned from the Ainur in Valinor, while Thingol's court got its knowledge from Melian. Sorcerers obtained their knowledge from Melkor, Sauron, or one of their powerful servants. The Fathers of the Dwarves learned from Aulë.

The style of magic-use depends upon die ultimate source of the knowledge. Magical devices and runes, for example, are Aulëan magic, while shape-changing would presumably be of Yavannan origin. Magic that bestows far-sight depends on powers learned from or conferred by Manwë. These different knowledges can be used together — as with the *palantíri*, which arc stones (Aulë) that bestow farsight (Manwë).

My preferred system would be based on a small number of basic effects which could be combined to produce more complicated magic. Developing a system that is consistent with all the uses of magic in Tolkien's Middle -earth stories would be very difficult, but would in any event probably take one of two forms: 1) spell lists which list both the range of possible effects and their variable difficulty, or 2) categorizations of effects and guidelines as to how difficult they are to produce. The latter system requires more work for the GM, since anytime a player wants to use magic, the GM has to work out which category or categories the effect falls in, and where it lies on the difficulty scale. This idea comes from the *An Magica* system, which uses both methods.

This article gives the barest outlines of a magic system and is in need of further development. I hope that this will have generated some responses in this vein. Some areas needing further investigation include: the workings of runes, protection or anti-protection spells, inheritable enchantments and more on the difference between Elven-magic and the deceits of the Enemy.

A JOURNEY IN THE DARK

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> 'Do not be afraid!' said Aragorn. There was a pause longer than usual, and Gandalf and Gimli were whispering together; the others were crowded behind, waiting anxiously. 'Do not be afraid! I have been with him on many a journey, it never on one so dark; and there are tales of Rivendell of greater deeds of his than any that I have seen. He will not go astray — if there is any path to find. He has led us in here against our fears, but he will lead us out again, at whatever cost to himself. I le is surer of finding the way home in a blind night than the cats of Queen Berúthiel.'
>
> — "A Journey in die Dark" *(The Fellowship of the Ring*: 325)

Much of the power inTolkien's narrative comes from its ability to create the illusion of depth by means of lacunae — *such as the mysterious cats of Queen Berúthiel, to which Aragorn makes allusion in the brooding darkness of Moria. As we wait with the Fellowship in that darkness, our thoughts linger on this cryptic remark. We begin to ponder who this Berúthiel might be, and in our mind's eye we imagine her world unfolding before us and around us like some unfathomable abyss of time and space. We are tempted to step into that world, and to look upon that abyss with eyes of the blind night. We prepare ourselves for a journey… in the dark*

INTRODUCTION

One of the reasons that people bother to role-play in Middle-earth stems from their desire to explore these suggestive openings in Tolkien's stories, and the purpose of this essay is to offer some ideas to prospective adventure writers on how to do this. At the same time, this is not meant to be a discussion of "theory"; rather, we want to demonstrate how one might go about turning lacunae into adventures by focusing on the concrete instance of Berúthiel. If our presentation seems overly "exhaustive" to some, then this is meant to show the potential richness of even the minor fragments of the world that Tolkien has left us to enjoy.

It is not our intention to offer here a fully fleshed-out background for adventures involving Berúthiel or her cats; instead, we seek to synthesize what is known about this enigmatic character and — like Sherlock Holmes — push the evidence as far as it will stretch without creating too many blank spaces to fill in. The method we use to investigate the legacy of Queen Berúthiel involves not only the "officially" published materials, but also the process which led to the development of their "finished" form. Much of this has become possible only recently with the "History of Middle-earth" series, but much still remains to be uncovered and many mysteries lie unanswered. All the better for an imaginative referee!

Were it not for the unceasing labors of Christopher Tolkien, we might have been left completely in the dark about his father's thoughts on Berúthiel. And indeed we were, until the publication of *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle earth* in 1980. In a footnote to the essay on the Istari, Christopher reveals to us — in part by quotation, in part by way of summary — J.R.R. Tolkien's last recorded reflection on the Queen and her cats:

> Even the story of Queen Berúthiel does exist, however, if only in a very 'primitive' outline, in one part illegible. She was the nefarious, solitary, and loveless wife of Tarannon, twelfth King of Gondor (Third Age 830-913) and first ot the 'Ship-kings', who took the crown in the name of Falastur 'Lord of the Coasts', and was the first childless king *(The Lord of the Rings,* Appendix A, I, ii and iv). Berúthiel lived in the King's House in Osgiliath, hating the sounds and smells of the sea and the house that Tarannon built below Pelargir 'upon arches whose feet stood deep in the wide waters of Ethir Anduin'; she hated all making, all colours and elaborate adornment, wearing only black and silver and living in bear chambers, and the gardens of the house in Osgiliath were filled with tormented sculptures beneath cypresses and yews. She had nine black cats and one white, her slaves, with whom she conversed, or read their memories, setting them to discover all the dark secrets of Gondor, so that she knew those things 'that men wish most to keep hidden', setting the white cat to spy upon the black, and tormenting them. No man in Gondor dared touch them; all were afraid of them, and cursed when they saw them pass. What follows is almost wholly illegible in the unique manuscript, except for the ending, which states that her name was erased from the Book of the Kings ('but the memory of men is not wholly shut in books, and the cats of Queen Berúthiel never passed wholly out of men's speech'), and that King Tarannon had her set on a ship with her cats and set adrift on the sea before a north wind. The ship was last seen flying past Umbar under a sickle moon, with a cat at the masthead and another as a figure-head on the prow (401-402).

It is evident that this is indeed an "unfinished" tale, as some of the most fundamental questions are left unanswered: Why was Berúthiel such an unsavory character in the first place? Who was she really and why was she so unceremoniously expurgated from the official memory of Gondor? What were "the dark secrets of Gondor" and what was her motive for seeking them out? Finally, what manner of creatures were her cats and how were they "enslaved" by the Queen? All of these are essential issues for any referee wishing to creatively exploit this lacuna for gaming.

One might have liked Christopher to have presented the full text of this "unique manuscript," rather than "abridging" it with his own summary, as the few quoted sections which do appear are tantalizingly rich in color and possibilities. To the best of my knowledge, the text of this manuscript is held neither by the

Bodleian in Oxford nor by the Marquette University archives in Wisconsin, which means that it is (at least for the present) unavailable for further investigation. But the inquisitive need not despair over this, because there are other existing fragments about Berúthiel which, in many ways, provide far more significant clues for decoding the origin and identity of this enigmatic figure.

THE EVOLUTION OF BERÚTHIEL IN TOLKIEN'S THOUGHT

Berúthiel first made her appearance around the latter half of 1940, during which time Tolkien was composing the first draft of Book 2 of *The Lord of the Rings* (see Carpenter, 1977: 194). In the chapter then titled "The Mines of Moria" (published posthumously by Christopher Tolkien in *The Return of the Shadow* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988), we find the most primitive version of the allusion:

> …Gandalf was guided mainly by his general sense of direction: and anyone who had been on a journey with him knew that he never lost that by dark or day, underground or above it: being better at steering through a tunnel than a goblin, and less likely to be lost in a wood than a hobbit, and surer at finding the way through night as black as the Pit than the cats of Queen Berúthiel (454).

The following editorial note appears in conjunction with this passage:

> This sentence was changed in the act of writing, the successive stages not being crossed out: 'than any cat that ever walked', 'than is the cat of Benish Armon', 'than the cats of Queen [Tamar > Margoliantë Berúthiel' — both these names being left to stand (464, note 26).

Before commenting on this passage, we should note that the allusion had already been anticipated by Tolkien in his "Sketch of the Mines of Moria chapter," which Christopher believes immediately preceded the writing of the chapter itself. The relevant segment runs as follows: "Their adventures must be made different from Lonely Mountain. Tunnels leading in every direction, sloping up and running steeply down, stairs, pits, noise of water in the darkness. Gandalf guided mainly by the general sense of direction" *(The Return of the Shadow.* 442). Christopher also notes that the sketch "…is a very striking example of an important narrative passage in *The Lord of the Rings* at its actual moment of emergence. Here as elsewhere many of the most essential elements were present from the first…" (ibid: 433).

The reference to "Berúthiel" thus appears to have emerged spontaneously as decoration for this otherwise premeditated passage about the difficulties in navigating the labyrinth of Moria. The footnote cited by Christopher strongly resonates with his father's later recollection that the character of Berúthiel "just popped up" (see Castell interview below). The identity of the comparison metamorphoses swiftly from cats in general to the cat of "Benish Armon" — which sounds to me more like a place name than anything else — and finally to the cats of a queen whose name undergoes similarly rapid evolution.

This leaves us with little sense of what this Berúthiel or her cats are like, but the name "Margoliantë" contains within it the (Quenya?) form "-liantë," which may or may not suggest for Tolkien overtones of the dark feminine (cf. the form Ungoliante/c in *Letters:* 180 and *The Shaping of Middle-earth:* 1SS, 26S, 288). The reference to the cats being able to find their way through night "as black as the Pit" in the final (draft) version of the passage may be alluding to Moria itself (S. Black Pit), but it may also contain evil associations. Sauron's eye, we will remember, is at one point described as a black pit, "a window into nothing" *(The Fellowship of the Ring:* 379). And let us not forget the Pits of Utumno.

At any event, this darkly suggestive allusion "obviously called for attention" (see Castell below). Some fourteen years after the original draft was composed (1954), the final text of the passage — with the spelling now altered to "Berúthiel" — appeared in *The Fellowship of the Ring.* But a few years after its publication, Tolkien claimed to have no further thoughts on the matter and to have written no independent material on the cats:

> …These rhymes and names will crop up; but they do not always explain themselves. I have yet to discover anything about the cats of Queen Berúthiel.
>
> — letter to WH. Auden *(The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien:* 217) 7 June, 1955.

> I do not think that anything is referred to in *The L. of the R.* which does not actually exist in legends written before it was begun, or at least belonging to an earlier period — except only the 'cats of Queen Berúthiel'.
>
> — letter to Lord Halsbury (The *Letters of J.R.R Tolkien:* 228) 10 November, 1955.

> …all these things are more or less written. There is hardly any reference in *The Lord of the Rings* to things that do not actually exist* on its own plane (of secondary or sub-creational reality): sc. have been written.
>
> *The cats of Queen Berúthiel and the names and adventures of the other 2 wizards (5 minus Saruman, Gandalf, Radagast) are all that I recollect.
>
> — letter to an unidentified reader *(The Letter of J.R.R. Tolkien:* 231) 14 January 1956.

From these exerpts it is clear that Berúthiel remained an enigma for some time after the completion of *The Lord of the Rings.* The appendices, which contained the character of Tarannon Falastur with whom Berúthiel was to become associated, were probably already published before he gave further thought to the matter (though the problem of explaining Tarannon's childlessness may have been one of the motives for attaching the figure of Berúthiel to him, as we shall sec). The initial connection must have been made at some point between 1956 (when the last letter referring to his ignorance about Berúthiel appeared) and 1966.

Just over a decade following the publication of *The Lord of the Rings,* Tolkien was interviewed by Daphne Castell concerning various aspects of his writings. In the course of this interview, Tolkien disclosed some fascinating clues about Berúthiel, many of which were to make their way into the manuscript summarized by Christopher in *Unfinished Tales.* This — presumably — earlier oral telling of the story, however, contains some critical elements which later disappear from or become submerged in the written version (at least as Christopher has reported it). Here are J.R.R. Tolkien's words quoted in full:

> "…Most of the allusions to older legends scattered about the tale, or summarized in Appendix A are to things which really have an existence of some kind in the history of which 'The Lord of the Rings' is part.
>
> "There's one exception that puzzles me — Berúthiel. I really don't know anything of her —you remember Aragorn's allusion in Book I (page 325) to the cats of Queen Berúthiel, that could find their way home on a blind night? She just popped up, and obviously called for attention, but I don't really know anything certain about her; though, oddly enough, I have a notion that she was the wife of one of the shipkings of Pelargir. She loathed the smell of the sea, and fish, and the gulls. Rather like Skadi, the giantess, who came to the gods in Valhalla, demanding a recompense for the accidental death of her father. She wanted a husband. The gods all lined up behind a curtain, and she selected the pair of feet that appealed to her most. She thought she'd got Baldur, the beautiful god, but it turned out to be Njord the sea-god, and after she'd married him, she got absolutely fed up with the seaside life, and the gulls kept her awake, and finally she went back to live in Jotunheim.
>
> "Well, Berúthiel went back to live in the inland city, and went to the bad (or returned to it — she was a black Númenorean in origin, I guess). She was one of these people who loathe cats, but cats will jump on them and follow them about — you know how sometimes they pursue people who hate them? I have a friend like that. I'm afraid she

took to torturing them for amusement, but she kept some and used them — trained them to go on evil errands by night, to spy on her enemies or terrify them."

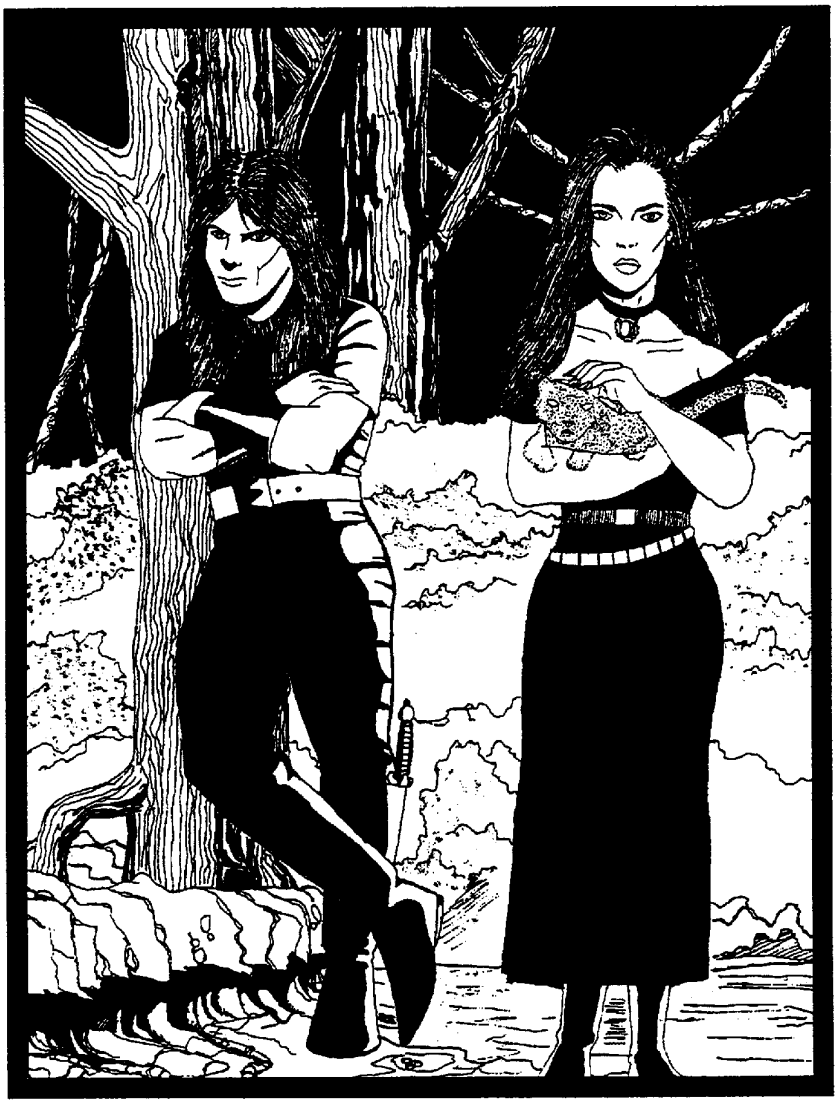
I should very much have liked to hear more about Queen Berúthiel, who sent a pleasant grue down my spine — it is not often you have the chance to listen to an entirely new story from your favourite storyteller.

But, as Professor Tolkien had said, he did not really know much more to tell me …

— Daphne Castell
"The Realms of Tolkien" (*New Worlds:* 147-148)
November, 1966.
[reprinted in *Carandaith* (1969)
1/2: 10-15,27]

Let us first take these words as they stand. Tolkien has fleshed out Berúthiel by associating her with "one of the ship-kings of Pelargir" (we cannot be sure that Tarannon is meant here but, for reasons that will become dear shortly, we believe him to be the most likely candidate, even at this stage of Tolkien's conception). In the interview, Tolkien also draws upon an episode from *The Prose Edda* of Snorri Sturluson, to which he compares Berúthiel. Finally, we are told that Berúthiel was of Black Númenorean origin — if our mouths are not already hanging open in amazement, then let us consider for a moment the supreme paradox of this statement: a Black Númenorean as the queen of Gondor?! How could such a thing come to be?

Already our minds are probably racing with this lynchpin to re-read the story as it is told in *Unfinished Tales,* trying to make sense of our heretofore unanswered questions about Berúthiel — but we are still left in the dark concerning a good many things. Moreover, since this clement of her identity seems to be absent or unspoken in the final manuscript, we must take a step back to ask ourselves whether or not this absence implies rejection on Tolkien's part — did he change his mind in the end? Unless some newly discovered letter or manuscript turns up, we will probably never know for sure, but we can venture an educated guess. In what follows, we shall attempt to do just that— first, by examining the Skadi myth and secondly, by doing some close detective work on the Black Númenorean hypothesis.



THE MARRIAGE OF SKADI AND NJÖRDR AS A PARALLEL TO BERÚTHIEL

Tolkien's telling of the Skadi myth reminds us of his own story "Aldarion and Erendis," which was composed around 1965, along with the map of Númenor and (we might surmise) the annals of the line of Elros (see *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth:* 7—9) — not more than a year before the Castell interview presumably took place, perhaps significantly, these stories of Berúthiel and Aldarion both seem to be emerging from problems raised by "Appendix A" (i.e. Tarannon's childlessness, the circumstances of the change in the law of succession under Aldarion). Could it be that Tolkien is preoccupied during this period of his life with resolving and expanding upon the lacunae developed in the writing of *The Lord of the Rings?*

Whether or not this is the case, the question still remains — why, out of all of the possible connections he could have made between the Berúthiel passage in "A Journey in the Dark" and the rest of his mythology, did Tolkien choose to associate Berúthiel and her cats with the Ship-kings? The answer may very well lie in the myth of Skadi and Njördr, as we shall presently make dear. To begin with, we quote this tale as it is told in the *Edda:*

Loath were the hills to me, I was not long in them
Nights only nine;
To me the wailing of wolves seemed ill, After the song of swans.

Then Skadi sang this:

Sleep could I never on the sea-beds,
For the wailing of waterfowl;
He wakens me, who comes from the deep —
The sea-mew every morn.

—Snorri Sturluson: *The Prose Edda*
(Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, trans.)
New York: The American-Scandinavian Foundation
1916:37.

berúthiel

> Now Skadi, the daughter of the giant Thjazi, took helm and birnie and all weapons of war and proceeded to Asgard, to avenge her father. The Æsir, however, offered her reconciliation and atonement: the first article was that she should choose for herself a husband from among the Æsir and choose by the feet only, seeing no more of him. Then she saw the feet of one man, passing fair, and said: "I choose this one: in Baldur little can be loathly." But that was Njördr of Nóatún.
>
> — Snorri Sturluson: *The Prose Edda* (Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, trans.) New York: The American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1916: 91-92.

> …Njördr has to wife the woman called Skadi, daughter of Thjazi the giant. Skadi would fain dwell in the abode which her father had had, which is on certain mountains, in the place called Thrymheimr; but Njördr would be near the sea. They made a compact on these terms: they should be nine nights in Thrymheimr, but the second nine at Nóatún. But when Njördr came down from the mountain back to Nóatún, he sang the lay below:

Here we find the opposition between land and sea that appears in "Aldarion and Erendis," but more importantly, we find a curious philological correspondence (which Tolkien would surely have been aware of). Nóatún, the dwelling place of Njördr the sea-god, is a name of Indo-European origin which means "Enclosure of Ships" (for a discussion of this, see Georges Dumézil: *Gods of the Ancient Northmen* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973: 77). It would be difficult to miss the affinity in meaning between Pelargir (S. Garth of Royal Ships) as the central focus of the Ship-kings, and Snorri's Nóatún as the home of the god whom Skadi marries.

It is unnecessary to speculate about the possible influences of this tradition on Tolkien's original conception of Pelargir (which first emerges sometime late in 1944 during the writing of Book 5); what *is* important is that at some point between the publication of *The Lord of the Rings* in 1954—1955 and the Castell interview in 1966, the problem of Tarannon's childlessness and the cats of Queen Berúthiel were linked *via* this myth into a single story, which was obviously still evolving in Tolkien's mind at the time of the interview.

What can this tell us about Berúthiel that we do not already know from *Unfinished Tales*? In what way was she "rather like Skadi?" To answer these questions, let us examine more closely the two explicit points of correspondence between them, and how Tolkien "translates" those elements from the nameless north of the *Edda* to his own imagined world of Middle-earth.

According to Tolkien, Berúthiel's resemblance to Skadi stems from: 1) her hatred of the sea, and 2) her withdrawal inland. Both of these moments in the narrative relate to this opposition between land and sea — between two modes of existence. Snorri accounts for this mutual antagonism in part by the conflicting natures of the couple: Njördr is one of the gods of Asgard (although originally of the Vanir), while Skadi is of the race of giants.

This racial or "species" difference is an important narrative clement in the failure of their marriage, hence Tolkien's concern in the interview to transpose it into an analogous opposition in Middle-earth. He achieves this by identifying Berúthiel as Black Númenorean — the moral and spiritual opposite of the Faithful. This thematic parallel to the Skadi myth appears to lend weight to the importance of Berúthiel's origin as articulated by Tolkien in the interview.

THE BLACK NÚMENOREAN QUEEN OF GONDOR

On the assumption that she was indeed of Black Númenorean origin, there are three fundamental questions which must be answered before Berúthiel can be incorporated into the background of a Middle-earth game: 1) where did she come from? 2) what were the initial circumstances of her marriage to Tarannon? and 3) what caused her to be expelled from Gondor? Certain aspects of these questions cannot be dealt with here, because they necessarily involve speculation — which is the job of the referee seeking to develop this material in an adventure or campaign context.

To begin with, it is axiomatic that Berúthiel would have been of high Númenorean race, because that was a prerequisite for royal status among Faithful and King's Men alike. To designate Berúthiel a Black Númcnorean may, at first glance, not seem all that helpful in pinpointing her place of origin (since the descendants of the King's Men who survived Akallabêth were scattered all over the coastlands of Middle-earth south of Belfalas Bay); but, despite its currency in Middle-earth gaming circles today, the exact expression "Black Númenorean" *occurs only once throughout the entire corpus of Tolkien's writings.* To the best of my knowledge, the only other time those words are reported to have passed Tolkien's lips is in the text of the Castell interview with reference to Berúthiel. The unique literary reference occurs in Appendix A with respect to a discussion of the inhabitants of Umbar:

> The great cape and land-locked firth of Umbar had been Númenorean land since days of old; but it was a stronghold of the King's Men, *who were afterwards called the Black Númenoreans* [my emphasis], corrupted by Sauron, and who hated above all the followers of Elendil.
>
> — "Gondor and the Heirs of Anarion" *(The Return of the King:* 325).

"Afterwards called Black Númenoreans" — after what? And by whom? Since there is no evidence of this expression with reference to the King's Men recorded in "Akallabêth" or other Second Age sources, we suggest that "afterwards" means after the Downfall of Númenor. The epitaph "black" is anything but complimentary, so it is highly unlikely that the expression would be one of self-definition. We are therefore left with the (most likely) alternative: that "Black Númenorean" was what the Faithful in Gondor called the inhabitants of Umbar after the Akallabêth.

The Black Númenoreans were led by "lords" who were driven from that haven by King Eärnil in the year 933 of the Third Age *(ibid).* These lords still served Sauron "gladly" in Middle-earth even after the Downfall *(The Silmarillion:* 293). "After the fall of Sauron their race swiftly dwindled or became merged with the Men of Middle-earth, but they inherited without lessening their hatred for Gondor. Umbar, therefore, was only taken at great cost" *(The Return of the King:* 325).

One "internal" piece of evidence to support Berúthiel's Umbarian origin is the story of her expulsion from Gondor. Her ship was said to have been "last seen flying past Umbar under a sickle moon." Seen? By whom? We must remember that this incident took place *before* Eärnil's conquest of Umbar, and that no person in Gondor would have been able to see where Berúthiel's fate had taken her. In fact, the entire tone of the expulsion narrative has something of a "legendary" or "folkloric" character to it, making its claims rather dubious. Nevertheless, it may have emerged as a popular expression of where the inhabitants of Gondor *believed* her to have come from.

Perhaps the most telling bit of circumstantial evidence in favor of an Umbarian origin is the historical context itself. It was Tarannon who first "extended the sway of Gondor along the coasts west and south of the Mouths of Anduin" *(The Return of the King:* 325). It is probable that the southward expansion would have brought him into contact and conflict with Umbar — he was the first Gondorian king to do so. Tarannon was king from 830 to 913, and this is the time of Berúthiel's presence in Gondor. All of a sudden, Eärnil began building a great navy with which to besiege Umbar, directly following Tarannon's death *(ibid).*

Exactly how Berúthiel's presence and expulsion relates to all of this is up to the referee to decide, but the evidence militates in favor of the view that she was originally from Umbar because: 1) the unique occurrence of "Black Númenorean" in Tolkien's writings is made with reference to Umbar; 2) the expulsion nar-

rative implicitly associates Berúthiel with Umbar; and 3) Tarannon is the first Gondorian king to have had contact with Umbar, and Berúthiel's presence is followed by Eärnil's conquest.

If it were the case that Berúthiel was a Black Númenorean from Umbar, how did she ever manage to become the queen of Gondor? Black Númenoreans were the ultimate expression of evil in the imagination of the Faithful after the fall of Sauron, and Umbar was the physical manifestation of that abomination which lingered on into the Third Age of the world. The only logical solution to this problem which we have been able come up with is that her origin was initially unknown to Gondor — her expulsion would then, perhaps, indicate that her true identity had been revealed at some point (sec Excursus One below for how Pat Wynne's theory of the name "Berúthiel" might contribute to this view). The expulsion itself would also support the Black Númenorean hypothesis, since to have one's name erased from the Book of the Kings would imply more than a condemnation of mere personal depravity (Castamir, for example, probably committed more offenses against his own people than any of his line, but his name was retained in the Book of the Kings despite this fact).

Another problem that presents itself with respect to the circumstances of Berúthiel's marriage to Tarannon is its initial purpose or motivation. Again, all we have are isolated facts waiting to be turned into a coherent story by the referee. What do we know about the Black Númenoreans in Umbar at this time? We are told that they harbored an undying hatred for Gondor, but we also hear that the purity of their bloodline was "diminishing." How might a marriage between one of the last pure lineages of Umbar and the line of Elendil figure in such a milieu?

A final note relating to the issue of both the motive and plausibility of Berúthiel's marriage to Tarannon is Tolkien's remark to Castell that, following her return to "the inland city" (presumably Osgiliath), Berúthiel "went to the bad (or returned to it...)." Either option leaves room for complex or multiple motivations, and in any event opens up the possibility that her initial presence in Gondor was not due to exclusively malicious or premeditated reasons — indeed, the structure of the Skadi myth implies that things do not turn out as they are expected or hoped for by the characters.

Perhaps the most important question to address is what went wrong — what event or events ultimately led to Berúthiel's expulsion? Of course, there are the cats; but her motive for sending them out to do evil is again unknown to us. What exactly is meant by "all the dark secrets of Gondor?" Surely, Berúthiel is not merely some undercover agent sent to gather intelligence for the lords of Umbar. But what kinds of "dark secrets" would a Black Númenorean be interested in? Perhaps some legacy of Westernesse holding the promise of deathlessness? Due to the fragmentary nature of the evidence and the constraints of this essay, such inquiry raises more problems than it solves.

Conclusion

At the end of our quest, we still find ourselves for the most part in the dark. Queen Berúthiel's is an unfinished tale in every sense of the word, which makes it ideal material for a game setting; and by surveying the development of this character over time, we have identified certain tendencies in her evolving story which could easily be exploited. In truth, the only way to learn the answers is to go beyond what has been presented here and invent them through one's own imagination — this is what role-playing is all about.

Excursus One: The Meaning of the Name "Berúthiel"

A discussion has taken place in the pages of the journal of the Elvish Linguistic Fellowship concerning the meaning of the name "Berúthiel." I have included this discussion for the convenience of the reader who wishes to dwell on this matter. Pat Wynne's theory that the name is a corruption of the more regal "Berethiel" may be quite appealing to those who believe that the Queen's true identity was initially concealed during her sojourn in Gondor.

> **Berúthiel (FotR:325: UT: 401-2, 423):** This name really puzzles me. Shall we see in that name a connection with 'bereth' 'queen'? Is it a negation? And is -thiel connected with Lúthien or with Thurin 'secret' or with Thingol? So Ber/ú/thiel should be 'Queen/not, without, less/?'. Help!
>
> Berúthiel — 'ber' Ilk. valiant man, warrior (emphasis mine); 'bes-, besu' dual, husband and wife, p.352. uthiel could be a negation of SEL-D (LR:385) N. iell "poetic *sell* and girl, maid"; warrior un-maid. Perhaps the Elven form of the English slang "The old-battle-axe"? — T.L.] **[Ed. (J.Q.) —J.R.R. Tolkien stated in an interview that Berúthiel was of Black Númenorean descent.]**
>
> — Tom Loback, item 4 in "Essitalmar" *(Vinyar Tengwar* 5: 10) May 1989.
>
> Berúthiel: My pet theory is that this name was originally Berethiel "Queen's daughter" or "Queenly maiden," and that as the unsavory personality of Tarannon's wife became apparent (see UT 401—2, note 7) it became habitual to punningly alter the name to Berúthiel. after Sindarin rûth "anger". This altered form then was the name by which she was ever after remembered."
>
> — Pat Wynne, "Essitalmar" *(Vinyar Tengwar 6:* 10) July 1989.

Ruth could also be a pun for Rûth "ire" altered from Bereth + iel (cf. Belegur/ Belegurth (Melkor); The Silmarillion 340). Or perhaps JRRT just liked the sound.

—Tom Loback?, "Essitalmar"? *(Vinyar Tengwar* 7: 12) September 1989.

Excursus Two: Iron Crown's Treatment of Berúthiel

ICE has been cautious to avoid offering a speculative interpretation of the evidence which would seal off other equally legitimate readings, but they have apparently been unaware heretofore of her Black Númenorean identity. The reference to her is included here as an example of one possible interpretation of Berúthiel in terms of *MERP/Rolemaster* game mechanics.

> **BERÚTHIEL** — Lvl: 25. Aka: "Daughter of the Queen;" Black Queen (S. "Morbereth" Q. "Mornatari"). A Dúnadan Mystic/Mage, Berúthiel was the Queen of Gondor during the reign of the first Ship-king Tarannon (T.A. 830—913). Spiteful and reclusive, she shunned the sea that her husband held so dear, and refused to live in the palace he erected over the river Anduin. Instead, she stayed secluded in undecorated chambers in the otherwise opulent King's House in Osgiliath. Hideous sculptures adorned her bizarre gardens, leading most of the members of the King's Court to believe she was insane. Tarannon's people despised her, suspecting Berúthiel of heinous nocturnal machinations. Indeed, the Queen spied on her subjects, communicating through her ten intelligent cats (one white and nine black). No one dared bother the creatures, who wandered the streets of the capital as Berúthiel's "eyes" and "ears." King Tarannon abandoned his love for her and eventually seized her evil cats and put them to sea in a drifting ship that was last seen off the coast of Umbar. Berúthiel abhorred beauty and decoration, although she was herself quite gorgeous. She dressed only in black or silver *Read **LotR** III 405; **UT** 401-2.*
>
> **Berúthiel**
> **Lvl** 25
> **Hits** 72
> **AT** No/2
> **DB** 30
> **Sh** N
> **Gr** N
> **Melee** OB 80da
> **Missile** OB —
> **M** 20
> **Notes:** Dunadan Mage/Mystic, Queen of Gondor
>
> — Peter C. Fenlon, Jr. *The Mannish Races* (Lords of Middle-earth Volume 2) Charlottesville, Virginia: Iron Crown Enterprises, 1987: 50, 51.

THE FORGOTTEN RACE OF THE DRUGHU

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Low, grey clouds hung like a blanket of ice between the snow-capped mountain peaks. Ered Nimrais — the White Horn Mountains — were nothing but faint shadows against the grey sky. The day was cold, but not wet. As the wind blew against his folded cloak, a rider pushed onwards.

Four days had passed since the rider had seen civilization. As a trapper and hunter, this wasn't a problem, but a blessing — the deeper he trekked into this pathless land, the better were his chances for a good hunt. Yet, for all the time he traveled, the rider could not forget the stories he had heard of this ancient land and of its mysterious inhabitants, whom the high men of Gondor called the Drúedain and the Rohirrim named "Woses." The latter held many legends and superstitions about them, but very little was known about these people of the mountains. Their magic was strange and their dislike of visitors was just as unusual.

A sensation of mystery filled the air. This vast, impenetrable wilderness, with its sweeping valleys and untamed mountains, was rarely traveled by Men or Elves, and the rider could not disregard the unnerving effect of the landscape in its silent beauty. Yet he traveled it alone.

Finally, on the fifth day, the rider had collected a bounty of pelts and was ending his hunt. Throughout the day, while collecting traps and snares, he felt that he was being watched — almost as if the stone-cold mountains themselves had eyes on him. Later, he made camp at the edge of an old, dried-up ravine which served as a natural trail for his horse, and built a small fire to dry his pelts.

It was a silent night in the mountains, and little sound of wildlife reached the hunter's camp. And yet, late in the night he heard what sounded like rocks falling from a ledge on the far side of the ravine. Feeling again the sense of being watched, he grabbed his hatchet and circled the area of the firelight, moving in the direction of the fallen rocks as silendy as a cat ready to pounce.

That was when he saw them on the ledge, motionless and quiet — three humanoids, sitting cross-legged, wthi their hands on their knees and faces looking out towards the hunter. They were neither Men nor Dwarves, yet they were short and strong-looking. Wthi muscular bodies, skin grey as ash, and deep-set eyes, they were as still as the mountains them-selves.

Fear struck the heart of the hunter as he froze in his steps, though the figures did not move. His mind reeling, the hunter waited for them to speak or even to attack, but they did not. Time stood still.

Finally, giving a faint chuckle, the hunter reached for a rock on the ground and threw it at one of the three figures. The rock ricocheted wthi the sound of stone on stone. It was a statue, cold and still. These were Púkel-men, the legendary Watch-stones of the Druedain.

Satisfied wthi this revelation, the hunter stood for a moment in thought. "If this is truly the stonecraft of the Drúedain," he said, "then I shall travel no further. I have all the furs that I have come for, and will leave tomorrow; for I would not want to confront these strange people who carve their images into stone." Then he returned to camp, overcome by hunger and sleep.

Wild dreams filled the hunter's mind later that night — dreams of the White Mountains, echoing to the ancient sounds of war, as hoards of Orcs traversed the rugged landscape towards Helm's Deep, never to survive the terror that watched their every step with stone-cold eyes. Faint whisperings of the name "Drughu" filled the dream, as the watchers slowly led their enemies into valleys and ravines where, by the faint light of the moon, they were silendy ambushed by small bands of stout Drûg warriors. Only the gurgling screams of the Orcs could be heard as they fell before the poisoned darts of the small but quick Drughu, who retreated into the hills as swiftly as they had appeared. As these echoes of war faded from his dream, the hunter's last thoughts lingered on the time which had passed between those days and now.

Morning came, and the hunter woke with the rising sun. The sky was clear and not as cold; the fur pelts he had collected draped his horse. The land had been kind to him, for he was ready to leave and could barter these furs for food for another winter.

Yet, as he was leaving, he looked back towards the ravine, remembering his fading dream of the night before. Still sitting, as permanent as the mountains themselves, were the two statues. They were simpler in the full daylight — rugged, wthi pleasant faces, and distinctly ancient. Yet as he spurred his horse and rode away towards home, he could only remember how he had sworn by the light of the moon last night that he had seen three *stone statues, instead of two.*

The Drughu

Throughout the writings related to Middle-earth, only occasional references have been made to the little-known people who called themselves the Drughu. In "The Ride of the Rohirrim," J.R.R. Tolkien himself names one of their chieftains — their "great headman" — Ghân-buri-Ghân *(The Return of the King:* 106). He goes into greater detail about the Drughu in his essay, "The Drúedain" *(Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth:* 377-387). The *MERP* supplements published by Iron Crown Enterprises also mention the Drúedain in passing.

The main purpose of this essay is to consolidate our knowledge about the Drughu with a view to including this fascinating race into Middle-earth campaigns. I have divided the necessary background information into the following sub-headings: 1) physical appearance, 2) native habitat, 3) legend and history, 4) culture, and 5) ceremonial magic. Additional information is supplied in relation to two very specific elements of Drughu culture — stonecrafting and war paint — which are explained in terms of RuncQuest game mechanics. Statistics for generating Drughu characters are also included.

I. Physical Appearance

The Drughu are unique among the races of Middle-earth in that they are unrelated to Men, Elves or Dwarves. Comparable in stature to the Dwarves (though somewhat stronger and hardier), they are a small race — about four feet tall, heavily set, and stocky. Their rugged lifestyle gives them very thick limbs and an equally dense build.

They have wide, flat faces, long noses, and wide mouths that move very little when they speak. Their eyes are deep-set, and covered with a heavy "Cro-magnum" brow. Unless one stands very close, a viewer looking at the face of a Drûg will most likely not see its eyes, which are nearly imperceivable due to the black color of their cornea, iris and pupil. Yet when angered, their eyes glow distinctly red and are bright enough to be seen even in daylight.

The Drughu have black to grey hair that grows thinly on their head, and eyebrows of the same color. They do not have any significant facial hair, although older males may sometimes grow a thin wisp of hair from the cleft in their chin. This is rare trait, and is therefore considered a mark of distinction by other Drughu.

Their skin is grey like stone, which explains partly why they are often called "Púkelmen" or "Stone-men." Sometimes their skin is decorated with paints and dyes but, unlike tattoos, these are only temporary and serve mostly as ceremonial or magical symbols.

By far the most remarkable characteristic of the Drughu is their appearance when sitting still in their native habitat: they appear more like stone statues than living creatures. Their nearly undetectable eyes and their stone-grey skin give them a lifeless, mysterious quality when seen.

II. Native Habitat

The Drughu live primarily among the Ered Nimrais, a rugged, mountainous terrain with thick forests and snowy winters. Wandering in small, nomadic clans, the Drughu live in complete seclusion from the rest of civilization, and very few people ever travel far enough into the White Mountains to see them. From the eastern

border of Lamedon to the northern and western peaks of Ered Nimrais and the forested plains of Drúwaith Iaur (S. Old Púkel-land), they have hidden for centuries. With little more than two thousand Drughu still in existence by the Third Age, they remain isolated, nomadic, and distrustful of outsiders.

From the beginning of the First Age and into the Second, the Drughu also dwelt in the lowlands of Middle-earth, and the remains of their stonecraft can be found throughout Gondor and even in parts of Eriador. In Beleriand at the Crossings of Teiglin, dozens of twenty-foot tall Watch-stones stood as representations of Drúadan warriors squatting heavily on dead Orcs. Living Orcs held these *"Oghor-hai"* (as they called the Drughu) in great fear, and would neither touch the statues nor destroy them. On the isle of Tolfalas, the Drughu long ago left large Púkel-statues as stone guardians overlooking the sea. These same Púkel-men have been found on the road leading to Dunharrow and the Paths of the Dead.

But, since the arrival of the powerful Dúnedain from over the sea and the wars with the Orcs throughout the ages, the Drughu have been increasingly forced into their mountain seclusion. The only real mass of Drughu left in all of Middle-earth during the Third Age inhabit the cold, highland regions of the White Mountains. Only occasional Northmen, Dunlendings or Gondorian gold miners have ever encountered a wandering Drug, considering these to be "Wild Men." Whole Drúadan clans are an even rarer sight. Yet the signs of Drughu stonecrafting culture can be found throughout Anfalas and southern Gondor. Hunters and soldiers often would kill the Drughu for sport or out of fear.

III. Legend and History

It is believed by most scholars that the Drughu were the original inhabitants of Anfalas. living in large nomadic clans, they originally migrated from lands south of Mordor, spreading out across the lowlands during the course of the First Age. During the wars of Beleriand, the Drughu sometimes aided Elves and Men by acting as scouts, a skill for which they won the highest renown in all of Middle-earth. They pride themselves on being able to smell a single *gorgûn* (i.e., Orc) from over a mile away.

During the bloodiest encounters, Drughu clans would send small parties of six to twenty warriors deep behind warring lines in order to cause confusion and destruction. Although these missions were dangerous, the Drughu were very successful, and were soon feared — among many other reasons, for their ambush and escape abilities.

Near to the end of the First Age, the Drughu had suffered great loss in numbers and were unable to recover due to their small family structure and brief lifespan. Even in the Third Age their population had never risen above two thousand, and this was dispersed among some hundred and thirty separate and largely isolated clans.

Shortly after the battles with the gorgun had ended, the Drughu were no longer so desperately needed by Elves or Men, and so returned to their secretive lands. There they remain hidden, avoiding the chaos of the outside world, and existing quietly. The Drughu have always held a burning hatred for Orcs, and cry "Kill gorgûn!" whenever they appear in their lands; yet only rarely will Orcs ever dare to enter lands known to be inhabited by Drughu.

IV. Culture

Technologically, the Drughu are a primitive race, unchanging as stone throughout the ages. They speak their own unique and somewhat alien language, although they have never developed a written form. They are limited to pictographs and simple symbols used in magical ceremonies. Although some of the more important clan leaders have learned how to speak or even write other languages. Ghân-buri-Ghân was rumored to be fluent in as many as three different languages. Danael, Westron, Rohirric, and (in Beleriand) Sindarin are the most likely tongues for such individuals to be conversant in.

Another distinctive clement of Drughu culture is their inability to forge iron, bronze, or indeed any metals. Even though gold is abundant in the White Mountains, they have seen little use in mining it Instead, the Drughu have developed the most common resources available to them — plants, wood and stone.

The Drughu are incredibly skilled herbalists and are rumored to be able to concoct drugs to heal mortal wounds, cure blindness, and even remove the poison inflicted by Orc-bladcs. Of course, they too have the ability to devise poisons (specially brewed to be used only against Orc-flesh). Such poison is strong enough to drop a horse with a single blow-gun needle, yet they never use it against races other than Orcs.

The Drughu also make body paint (often called "war paint"), which they apply to their skin from plant pigments. This paint is functional as well as ceremonial, in that it operates as a slow-acting drug, releasing anti-exhaustion medicine through the pours of the skin, and allowing the Drughu to keep from tiring in time of war, forced marches, or physically demanding magical ceremonies.

As for their use of wood, they use it primarily for tools and weapons — shaft spears with stone heads to hunt, wooden blow guns to induce their poisons, and wood clubs with stone spikes to melee.

But the Drughu do not use armor of any kind, and wear only the most limited fur or skin loincloths for clothes. Shamans or chieftains often wear grass skirts for distinction, while Drug warriors wear thin furs or leather. Weather is rarely a problem for them, except during heavy snowstorms; hence, they do not wear boots except during the harshest winters, at which times they may gather together in a cave or similar shelter. The rest of the time the Drughu live outdoors, without shelter or cover from the elements. They travel lightly, carrying all their possessions in small bags, and never taking more than they need for the day.

The key to Drughu philosophy is their relationship to the environment. They live in complete harmony with the land. Although they often use Watch-stones and Púkel-men as territorial boundary markers, outsiders often confuse these as being "property" markers. This, however, is misleading, since the Drughu do not claim to own the land, but instead believe the land owns *them,* who are merely its "guests." The building and use of Watch-stones serves mostly to remind outsiders of their responsibility not to over-hunt or over-harvest the bounty of the mountains. This is why the foresters and gold-miners of Anfalas are not much liked by the Drughu.

Magical ceremonies and rituals of stonecrafting are valued as the "cornerstone" (to blatantly use the pun) of Drûg culture. Oral tradition has handed down hundreds of ceremonies involving the crafting of stone faces and statues. The magic involved in these ceremonies is more sacred and secretive than any other element of their lore. Stonecrafting ceremonies can be summed up into two different kinds, to be explained below.

V. Ceremonial Magic

The primary means of defense and security at the disposal of the clans are the Watch-stone and Púkel-man. These magical images can be made only by the Drughu, and remain one of the their most jealously guarded secrets. Although technically any Drûg with the proper training can make a Watch-stone or Púkel-man, this is usually the prerogative of the shaman (the principal magic-user of the clan).

Watch-stones

These are the most common of all stone creations of the Drughu. They are crafted out of the face of rock cliffs, large boulders, stone pillars, cave walls or even stone steps on horse trails. They appear simply as crudely carved faces set in stone, although sometimes painted with strange, plant-based dyes. Many lands inhabited or previously inhabited by the Drughu are littered with Watch-Stones.

The purpose of these magical stones is to see through the eyes of the stone face, as if it were the eyes of the Drug himself. The Drûg can sit miles away and observe outsiders or enemy intruders, as if he were there in person. By using Watch-stones, the Drughu watchers often determine if outsiders/wanderers are a threat and

should be attacked, or if they are harmless and should simply be avoided.

Shamans often watch through as many as a dozen such stones at a time for days on end, enabling them to survey many miles of territory simultaneously. In seeing the outside world through the cold eyes of the Watch-stones, the Drughu are able to transfer their perceptive faculties from their physical bodies to those of the stones — without food, water, and exposed to the weather (snow and rain) for as long as a week. Some are rumored to be able to sit longer, unmoved the entire time, while being completely at one with their environment (While in such a state, they are often mistaken for statues).

By positioning themselves among groups of other stone statues and "blending in," many races are often struck with uncertainty when observing a collection of Púkel-men, asking themselves: *"Are* the Púkel-mcn you see simply statues, or are they living Drughu? Either possibility can become equally dangerous!" Between the shamans' vigilant watch over their dwelling places, and the Drughu's scouting and legendary tracking mastery, very little ever happens in the White Mountains that the keeps the clans well informed and aware of danger.

To create a Watch-stone, a Drûg need only perform a stonecrafting ceremony, which lasts one hour and requires a POW x 5 roll for success. During the ceremony, the Drûg must spend 1 *permanent* point of POW, which enchants the Watch-stone with living energy from its maker, forever binding the Drug to the stone. Even after death, other Drughu may use the Watch-stone if they properly invoke the name of the stone and the maker.

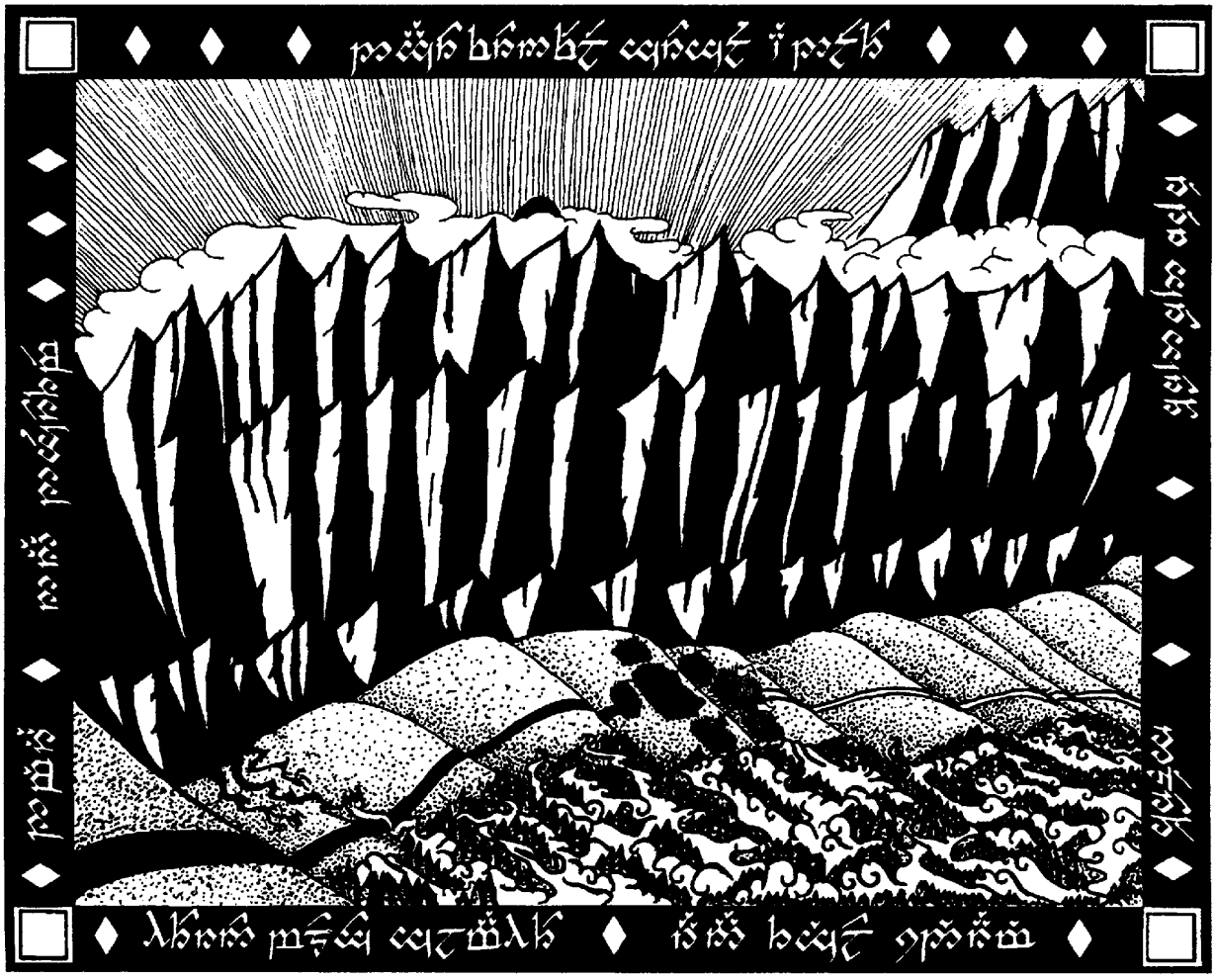
Once crafted, a Drug may see through the Watch-stone at will. To do so requires a successful POW x 5 roll, and the expenditure of 1 Magic Point. Even when not being actively used, any creature touching the Watch-stone (or any Orcs walking too close to it) will produce a tangible sensation for the Drûg. A Watch-stone will never lose its capacity for "seeing" unless its face is damaged beyond all recognition, in which case the stone will become disenchanted and a whole new stonecrafting ceremony will need to be repeated in order to restore its capability.

PÚKEL-MEN

These are the most powerful creations of the Drughu. Used as guardians and sentinels, Púkel-men are usually life-like stone statues of Drughu warriors. Averaging anywhere between four and twenty feet tall, they can be an ominous sight when beheld at rest, and a terrifying sight when awakened for battle.

They combine the "seeing" ability of the Watch-stones with the mobility of a living creature. When a Púkel-man is activated by its creator (who can be miles away) it becomes a giant, stone soldier under the "remote control" of its creator. Moving very life-like, these nearly invulnerable golem statues often equal the strength of a Troll, but are unfortunately rather clumsy. Although they have mostly been used against the Orc hordes in wars, like the Crossings of Teiglin, it is not unthinkable that the Drughu would fail to unleash a few of these juggernaughts on human enemies if the safety of their clans was at stake.

A minimum of two points of permanent POW must be expended in this stonecrafting ceremony, with no maximum POW limit. For every point of permanent POW sacrificed, the



Drughu don't know about. Which, of course,

creator may animate 2D6 STR, 2D6 CON, and 1D6 SIZ points of crafted stone. The ceremony takes twenty-four hours and cannot be interrupted; the Púkel-stone must be fully carved within this time period, and permanent POW must be spent to complete the ceremony. Often, shamans from different clans assist each other in the construction of larger and more powerful Púkel-mcn. If the ceremony is interrupted any time after the first hour of casting, all permanently expended POW is lost. Interrupting a stonecrafting ceremony is considered the greatest insult (to say nothing of injury) possible to a Drûg shaman.

To succeed in crafting a Púkel-man, the creator must successfully roll under POW x 4. Once completed, the statue will remain immobile, acting only as a Watch-stone until activated. To animate the Púkel-man, the user must expend Magic Points equal to the permanent POW used to create the Púkel-man. It is not a simple thing to animate stone; so for every round the Púkel-man is moving about, the creator must expend 1 Fatigue Point. In combat, the Púkel-man obliges the controller to expend 2 Fatigue Points per round. This animation of a Púkel-man can be extremely tiring, which is why many Drughu use endurance drugs, like "Gnosh" (see below), to lesson physical, mental and magical Fatigue. Finally, any damage that penetrates through the Púkel-man's natural stone "armor" is magically transferred to its creator as 1 Hit Point of damage.'

"Gnosh" Body Paint

Used to meet the more exerting demands of their existence, warriors, shamans, women and children alike use variations of these plant-based body paints called "Gnosh." From stonecrafting ceremonies to forced marches in times of danger, the Gnosh plant is only one example of Drughu expertise in herbalism and plant lore.

A successful Plant Lore roll is needed to prepare this Gnosh war paint, the use of which allows a Drug to expend Fatigue Points without suffering immediate effects. The Drûg can even expend negative Fatigue Points far beyond his total allowed limit.

All Fatigue Points must be regained normally. Gnosh will remain inactive until the wearer begins to sweat (i.e., expends Fatigue Points). The anti-fatigue drug takes effect immediately after it is activated, lasting for 4+1D4 hours. Other variations of Gnosh dye are rumored to exist, including strength, speed and magic-increasing effects.

'Gor-Clatu'* – 4 pt Púkel-man

(relatively common)

Characteristics		Ave		
STR:	8D6	28	**Move:**	1
SIZ:	4D6	14	**HP:**	21
CON:	8D6	28	**Armor:**	8 pts.
POW:	4 pts	NA		(4 pts +1/P0W)
DEX:	½ controller's DEX	5	**Fatigue:**	4 (sec above)

Punch
Strike Rank: (10)
Attack Base: 25 + 5%/POW(4) = 45%
Damage: 1D6 (+2D6)

Grapple
Strike Rank: (10)
Attack Base: 25% +5%/2 POW **(4) = 35%**
Damage: 2D6(+2D6)

*This Púkel-man is named Gor-Clatu, "Gor" being the name given to the stone, and "Clatu" being the name of its Drûg creator.

A Drughu Conclusion

"Kill gorgûn! Kill orc-folk! No other words please…"

Much as the Drughu would like partings to be always short and sweet, I can only hope I have said enough without saying too much! It is my hope that the information I have provided has peaked the curiosity of a few gamemasters and players, and that a fair share of adventure writers might have had their curiosity sparked as well.

Additionally, I hope my supplementation of game mechanics has helped illuminate the relationship between the Drughu stonecrafters and their Watch-stones and Púkel-mcn. I hope that those who do not use *RuneQuest* rules can appreciate the simplicity of my explanations, and convert them easily to their own rule system.

Finally, I believe that the revival of the Middle-earth gaming universe is going to involve more than a mundane understanding of individual peoples. A full understanding, by gamemasters and writers, of all the relationships and mysteries of little-known people like the Drughu is very important.

Middle-earth is not just a combat playground for Men, Dwarves, Elves, Hobbits and Orcs. The world is a carefully designed web of complex relationships between people, culture, power, technology, magic and politics. All of these elements, not just one, should be kept in mind when attempting to run a Middle-earth campaign. For this reason, I believe the Drughu shed some interesting and thought-provoking light. Their position outside conventional society and mannish "civilization" gives them a unique perspective to role-play from. I believe the Drughu can expect a slow revival in role-playing games because of their unique position in Middle-earth. As history has shown already, it is unlikely the inhabitants of Middle-earth will ever forget the contributions of the Drughu.

1. It does not matter whether the damage broke the arm off of the Púkel-man, or if it created only a large chip, the damage is transferred to the Drûg as 1 Hit Point of damage; hence the controller cannot be killed from this form of combat, since the damage is not completely proportional. The lowest the Drûg can be reduced by this kind of damage is 2 Hit Points (at which point the controller is rendered unconscious and, therefore, unable to animate the Púkel-man further). The remaining wounds usually heal back at twice the normal healing rate. Although magical fighting with Púkel-men is fairly safe for Drughu controllers, the pain still remains very real and the damage is still deadly.

Drughu

Characteristics		Average		
STR:	3D6+6	17	**Move:**	2
CON:	2D6+12	19	**Hit Points:**	13
SIZ:	2D6	7	**Fatigue:**	36
INT:	2D6+3	10		
POW:	2D6+6	13		
DEX:	3D6	10-11		
APP:	2D6	7		

Armor: None

Weapons: *Attack Mod +1 Parry Mod + 8*
Short Spear (35%); Club (45%); or Blow Gun (45%) (laced with Potency 18+1D6 Poison)

Skills:

Agility: +8
Climb 45, Dodge 20, Jump 30, Ride 00, Swim 05

Communciation: +0
Sing 00, "shaman" or "chieftan" may speak Danael, Westron, Northman and/or Sindarin at Communication Modifier x 3 in %

Knowledge: -3
Animal Lore 20, Stone Craft 35, Mineral Lore 30, Plant Lore 40, Read/Write Language 00

Manipulation: +1

Perception: +6
Listen 30, Scan 30, Search 35, Smell 50, Track 50

Stealth: +1
Hide 25, Sneak 25

A Reply To ICE's "Open Letter"

James Owen
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In Other Hands 1, *Pete Fenlon of Iron Crown Enterprises wrote a long piece which was part history, part* mea culpa, *part "whither ICE?" It was designed to "invite some constructive discussion about our future plans." I think that in many respects Iron Crown has done a good job on their Middle-earth output over the last ten years. However, like the curate's egg, other parts are not so good.*

Since ICE holds the exclusive license for Middle-earth role-playing games, we should in good faith, and with constructive criticism, help them improve their products and remedy these deficiencies. I wish therefore to provide my opinions, good and bad, and reply to their letter in detail, first with my criticisms of their current output and then with some suggestions of my own, in the hope of stimulating debate.

"Where We're Coming From..."

By their own account, ICE is attempting to fill the gaps in Middle-earth which Tolkien left unwritten, so as to provide a detailed campaign setting suitable for discerning role-players, while at the same time remaining faithful to Tolkien's original vision. They "care what gets written" and believe that "quality is more important than quantity." What has been the result of this "patience and commitment" over the last ten years?

While some of the earliest titles are not so good, either in artwork or content, the general form and layout of the *Middle-earth Role Playing* campaign modules is very good, and the emergent "Iron Crown style" has matured well. The maps in each supplement are extremely good to look at, not least because the style is reminiscent of Christopher Tolkien's. A complete set of these maps (rather than the glossy poster maps) should be published, covering the whole of northwestern Middle-earth. Angus McBride's cover artwork is also attractive, although it may in some minds overemphasize the combat side of role-playing.[1] The front covers certainly go a long way towards making the supplements the high-quality products that ICE desires.

The internal artwork is of slightly more variable quality, but at its best (such as the trap pictures in *Moria)* it is elegant and informative. Looking inside the covers, the area description and site plans are good, although restricting the modules to TA 1640 often clashes with the natural desire to write about places as they are best known from *The Lord of the Rings.* This is particularly noticeable in *Isengard,* where most of the description of Orthanc tacitly assumes the presence of Saruman, even before he went there.

Other supplements, such as the "Lords of Middle-earth" series, are less satisfactory in my opinion because they are mere compilations of data derived from the campaign modules and Tolkien's own characters, without much editing or revision. It is rather annoying here to see two separate sets of stats for *MERP* and *Rolemaster,* including two different classes (the *MERP* one usually being rather generic and less apt). *Treasures of Middle-earth* is far too fat to be "faithful," and has been compiled without discretion, including treasures even from such out-of-print modules as *The Court of Ardor.*

Pete Fenlon tells us that ICE's authors are trained in necessary specialties such as cartography, history, architecture and anthropology (3). I am, however, forced to be skeptical about the breadth of this expertise. For example, it is obvious to me (as one whose field is materials science) that the author of the materials sections in the *Lórien* and *Moria* supplements (which have been merged in *Treasures of Middle-earth:* 129—132) was not an expert.[2]

It is one thing to introduce a magical substance with amazing properties (such as laen or mithril), or even to suggest that a uranium-mithril alloy could act as an anti-gravity device (many science fiction writers have done worse); but it is quite another matter to invent common properties of real, well-known metals such as iron or aluminum, or to misinterpret the consequences of these properties. This is not "combining 'real world' experience with 'fresh fantasy (4),'" but carelessness.

Even one of the many helpful maps in the recently published *Gazetteer* (see review on pgs. 26—27) — a geological one detailing the mineral deposits of Middle-earth — is technically marred. By all means, use chemical symbols such as "Fe" for iron and "Au" for gold to indicate the locations of minerals; but don't at the same time use "C" for copper (Cu) or "S" for silver (Ag), especially as these are the chemical symbols for carbon and sulfur. If you are making a (laudable) attempt to "employ the same techniques used by Professor Tolkien (4)," then you must also include an obsessive attention to details, because "quality products perform better in the 'long run' (3)."

This may seem unnecessary pedantry, as the vast majority of readers would not notice these errata. However, if I spot something wrong in an area that I *do* know about, then I will not be able to trust the research done by the authors in other fields where I am not an

expert. Simplification of the complexities is necessary, but it can be done without sacrificing accuracy.

The next question raised by Mr. Fenlon is whether *MERP* is a good role-playing system for Middle-earth. As they stand, the ICE supplements seem to have been written with *Rolemaster* (rather than *MERP)* in mind, so that a separate rules system seems almost unnecessary. Original *Rolemaster* is a good set of rules, designed to accommodate any setting, with the GM given free rein to modify rules as appropriate, although the proliferation of companions has rather detracted from this simplicity. *MERP* seems to me to be a trimmed version of *Rolemaster,* removing some of the options without actually making the system any simpler, nor do I feel that it is sufficiently tuned to role-playing in Middle-carth.

As Mr. Fenlon says, ICE have produced a good set of rules, but they have failed to avoid grafting Tolkien's world onto an existing game system. The magic system, for example, is too D&D-like, although some sort of compromise between Tolkien's vague references to magic and a playable and interesting role-playing game has to be made. Gamers are going to want to play magic-using characters, even if there is little overt magic in *The Lord of the Rings,* but the current system is oriented far too much towards this kind of "payability" and too far away from the correct "flavor."

At a time when there was a move away from generic "multiverse" role-playing to setting-specific rules systems, *MERP* seems to have tried to swim against the tide by allowing too many "multiverse" assumptions to creep into the rules, and by making the style and rewards of adventuring too generic. The adventures in the back of the rulebook are littered with magic items and treasure, and the introductory scene at the front is a combat between the players and three nameless orcs. This is perhaps an attempt to interest non-Tolkien gamers and wean them away from other worlds, but by the same token this strategy could backfire by driving away Tolkien fans who are potential gamers.

I myself started playing *Rolemaster* because it was a far better system than *AD&D,* but I was not looking to role-play in Middle-earth at the time. It was only later that I started using *MERP* supplements (and then only because they were there), but without modifying my characters or my style of play. This was mostly my fault, but the way in which the adventures had been written did not help. That players are not using the "house" rule system is not a serious problem. As Mr. Spock might have said, "rules are the beginning, not the end, to good role-playing."

Most good role-playing consists in talking rather than dice-rolling. For this reason, ICE is quite right to hope that the supplements will sell on their own as descriptive material, even if they arc being used by GM's with other rule systems. I have found that they even sell to non-gamers who are Tolkien fans because they are a good read as a description of an area or time not detailed by Tolkien himself (I predict that the *Gazetteer* will be a good example of this.).

To encourage this kind of audience, the way to go about writing modules would be to avoid system-specific artifacts, characters or monsters, and to concentrate instead on a more general description of people and places. One way in which ICE docs this well already is by describing everything in words, followed by a clearly-defined (and ignorable) box converting the description into *Rolemaster* and *MERP* stats. Here again there is a role for attractive artwork, plans and cartography.

'WHITHER ICE?'

When Iron Crown has finished its *Akallabêth* and the world has been made round, there will be four ways to run ICE games in Middlc-carth: 1) as "self-contained board-game-like adventures,"' 2) *The Lord of the Rings Adventure Game,* 3) *2nd edition MERP,* and 4) *Rolemaster* (see *OH* 1: 5—6). To have four gaming systems applicable to Middle-earth seems otiose. I have not played *The Lord of the Rings Adventure Game,* so I cannot comment on it, but *Rolemaster* is not a beginner's game, and some sort of novice rules would therefore be useful.

As I see it, *2nd edition MERP* will be one of two products. Either ICE should design a rules system specifically tuned to Middle-earth gaminp, without reference to *Rolemaster,* or it should content itself with a modification of *Rolemaster.* In the first case, starting from scratch should produce a set of rules highly suitable for Middlc-carth, but would mean much more effort for ICE, who would have to rewrite the current modules from a much lower level because they would be completely incompatible with future output. This might have been an option ten years ago, but I don't think it is a serious one now.

My second suggestion for *2nd edition MERP* would be to go through the *Rolemaster* system and all its many companions, and sort out from these the optional rules, character classes, magic etc. which would be applicable to Middle-earth; then combine these into one book called *Middle-earth Companion* or something (along the lines of the *Vikings, Pirates,* and *Mythic Greece/Egypt* supplements). *2nd edition MERP* would then be either a boxed set of *Rolemaster* plus this companion, or existing *Rolemaster* players could just buy the one supplement. This would avoid having to have separate *MERP* and *Rolemaster* stats for the NPC's in all the supplements, and allow the great flexibility of the *Rolemaster* system to be used to its full extent. From a marketing point of view, it would also mean that more people would be buying the complete *Rolemaster* system, as opposed to the less expensive *MERP* rules.

Digressing slightly, most of the new character classes which have appeared in the later companions should be ruthlessly rationalized. The original strength *of Rolemaster* was that a wide variety of characters with different abilities could be produced from one class, because of the freedom of players to develop any skill they liked at a cost, so that stereotyped fighters or thieves were rare, and no one could say: "You can't do that, you're not a cleric." But now with so many classes, the *raison d'etre* of the character generation system has been eroded, while the complexities remain.[4]

On the magic front, one sweeping and possibly simplistic suggestion would be to restrict the magic available in Middle-Earth — even more than has been done in *MERP* — to Channeling magic only, on the grounds that all power originally comes from the Valar. Nowhere does Tolkien suggest that magical power came from the earth itself, which would be required for Essence. However, I will leave possible new magic systems to future issues of *Other Hands.*

Middle-earth is not combat or magic-heavy (The Fellowship were certainly trying to avoid a fight.); it is much more a character-oriented world (In the last campaign I played, for example, I never used my sword over an entire week's gaming.). Gandalf knew that his job was not to use his 70th level magic to blast Sauron's forces to pieces (although he did use low-key magic where necessary) but to use his personality and wisdom to persuade the peoples of Middle-earth to fight and win their own war. The importance of combat for experience points could therefore be downgraded.

Once all these modifications have been incorporated, do not be afraid that the resulting rule system will be very Tolkien-oriented (it is supposed to be *Middle-earth* role-playing, after all). For every "hack and slay" maniac you lose because there aren't enough magic items falling out of every chest, you will gain a Tolkien fan who decides that in some insubstantial way the system "feels" right. An advantage to this will be that the Middle-earth material will then fit seamlessly into the rest of ICE's output, but will still retain its autonomy.

Having read the *Vikings* supplement, which had virtually no gaming data in it anywhere (and was obviously well-researched), I believe that this approach could work well. Gamers who do not care for the *MERP* flavor can still adventure in other more suitable ICE universes (such as *Shadow World)* and can easily move between that and *MERP.*

Conclusions

I do not pretend that I could produce a perfect game system, or even that these are novel comments about *MERP*. I am quite sure that there is much more that could be said, both as criticisms of current output, and hopes and ideas for the future. However, I hope that my comments amount to "constructive discussion" of the sort Mr. Fenlon desires, and that I have provoked others to share their thoughts on *MERP,* both with *Other Hands* and with ICE.

Footnotes

1. Some of this cover art is worthy of being published on individual posters. I would like a large poster of his Eowyn vs. the Nazgûl for a start.

2. As many of my criticisms necessitate an extensive discussion of this topic, I shall reserve the specifics for another occasion.

3. I was slightly worried about Mr. Fenlon's gleeful description of the accessories in the projected line of new, boxed adventures. I am afraid that an overemphasis on packaging, "cardboard playing pieces, full color character templates (6)," rather than good writing and high-quality content is moving in a direction away from the unfettered imagination, which is where role-playing must lie.

4. I also think that skill costs should depend upon personal ability more than class.

Scandinavian Influences on Orkish

Anders Blixt: Hagervagcn 16, S—122 39, Enskede, Sweden

Byrdi betri
berrat madr brautú at
en sé manvit mikit.
(Better burden
can no man bear
than much common sense)

— *Hávamál (Norse[1] collection of wisdom)*

When I first glanced through the seven page English-Orkish dictionary appearing in the Iron Crown module Empire of the Witch-king, *written by Graham Staplehurst and Heike Kubasch, my eyes were caught by thefamiliar word "sjuk," which in my native Swedish — and in Orkish as well, it seems — means "sick" or "ill." I could not believe it to have been a coincidence, as an English-speaker would hardly by chance begin a word with so unwieldy a consonant cluster to the Anglo ear as "sj" (a common construction in Swedish and Norwegian, pronounced like "sh" in English). As a quick glance through the glossary revealed a number of recognizable words in various Scandinavian languages[2] I decided to undertake a more thorough investigation. The reason for doing this was a mixture of amusement and curiosity — being a author of Middle-earth modules, I like to find out how other game writers work.*

The glossary table

The foregoing table on the next page excerpts those words from section 11.3 of *Empire of the Witch-king* which contain the most obvious Orkish/Scandinavian correspondences (I may have overlooked some Icelandic ones, since I have poor knowledge of that tongue). I have not found any pattern behind the choice of words; they rather seem to have been picked at random.

I have not included the many two- and three-letter words where the meanings assigned in Orkish differ significantly from their Scandinavian equivalents, since these may be pure coincidences. Similarly, I have excluded a few words (e.g. rændi), wbich look and sound Icelandic or Norse, but whose Scandinavian origin I have been unable to verify. Words for which the Orkish and original meanings are more or less identical have been italicized.

Scandinavian languages in Middle-earth perspective

When we read his scathing (and justified) criticism of Åke Ohlmarks' poor Swedish translation[6] of *The Lord of the Rings,* it is obvious to us Swedes that J.R.R. Tolkien was a man for whom languages, names and words were of great importance. Tolkien knew Swedish well enough to be able to read Ohlmarks' text and to spot a number of embarrassing and silly errors. The two professors quarreled over the matter and, eventually, Ohlmarks was forbidden to translate any of Tolkien's other work.

If Professor Tolkien would have put Scandinavian languages in Middle-earth, they would most likely have been used to demonstrate the relationship of an existing Endorian language to

Westron, which is represented by English. Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian have the same relation to Norse as English has to Anglo-Saxon (the latter serving to represent the tongue of the Rohirrim, which was supposed to be related to Westron). Norse and Anglo-Saxon were contemporary in our world — siblings descended from the common Germanic tongue that was spoken in Roman times.

Thus, without straining the inner logic of Arda, the Scandinavian tongues should, at the end of the Third Age, be spoken by Northern peoples living at a distance from the Anduin vale and Eriador, perhaps in Dorwinion.[7] A Westron-speaker would have a hard time understanding them in speech, but in reading their texts would see many similarities.

It is therefore unlikely that Professor Tolkien would have put Scandinavian words into the mouths of Orcs, unless they were straightforward loans from these Northman languages. For that reason, I disapprove somewhat of the Orkish vocabulary created by Messrs.Staplchurst and Kubasch; perhaps they should instead have used the same approach to words and languages as the original sub-creator himself.

Orkish	Translation	Real meaning	Language
auga	*eye*	*eye*	*Ic*
baum	*plant*	*tree*	*Ge*
braun	rib	brown	Ge
daga	*dawn*	*dawn (vb)*	*Sw*
draugur	*ghost*	*water-undead*	*Ic*
dyr	*animal*	*animal*	*Da*
eitur	*poison*	*poison*	*Ic*
flak	dash	flow	Sw
gagna	*help*	*benefit (vb)*	*Sw*
galin	*crazy*	*insane*	Norse
glima	wrestle	gleam (vb)	Sw (correct sp: glimma)
gnyja[5]	*rage*	*rage (vb)*	*Ic*
goltur	*boar*	*boar*	*Ic (correct sp: göltur)*
grop	*hollow*	*hollow*	*Sw*
halz	*lame*	*lame*	*Sw (correct sp: halt)*
hnifur	*knife*	*knife*	*Ic*
hugi	*mind*	*thought*	Norse
huka	*squat*	*squat (vb)*	*Sw*
hundur	*dog*	*dog*	*Sw*
hund	nose	dog	Sw
illa	*worst*	*bad*	*Sw*
illska	*hatred*	*anger*	*Sw (correct sp: Ilska)*
jarn	*iron*	*iron*	*Sw (correct sp: järn)*
karg	tear	barren	Sw
kasta	*throw*	*throw (vb)*	*Sw*
kista	*chest*	*cheat*	*Sw*
korn	cart	(a grain)	Sw
kurv	whore	basket	Da
laga	magical	repair (vb)	Sw
lundar	ship	copses	Sw
mattugur	*powerful*	*powerful*	*Ic (correct sp: máttugur)*
nat	*night*	*night*	*Sw (correct sp: natt)*
onreinn	*dirty*	*unclean*	*Ic (correct sp: óhreinn)*
pafund	abyss	dea	Sw (correct sp: påfund)
rifa	*demolish*	*demolish*	fc *(correct sp: rífa)*
sjuk	*sick*	*sick, ill*	*Sw*
skamma	*revile, scold*	*shame (vb)*	*Sw (correct sp: skämma)*
Skator	hell	magpies	Sw
skugga	shallow	shadow	Sw
sma	*little*	*small*	Sic *(correct sp: små)*
stor	*huge*	*big*	*Sw*
varg	chain	wolf	Sw

Glossary Excerpts (Da = *Danish, Ge = German, Ic = Icelandic, Sw = Swedish, vb = verb)*

Note: The diacritic signs (e.g. å, ä/æ, ö/o etc)[3] that are so important in the Scandinavian languages are absent in Staplehurst and Kubasch.[4] There are a few other minor spelling errors, too.

FOOTNOTES

1. Norse and Icelandic use the letter "d" for Sindarin DH.
2. The sister-languages Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish are very closely related and mutually intelligible — at least in writing. Icelandic is a more distant and archaic sibling, closer to the common ancestor Norse, and hence more difficult for us Swedes to understand. German is related to them, but more distantly, as is English.
3. Å is pronounced as Sindarin O. Ä (Æin Danish and Norwegian) and Ö (Ø in Danish and Norwegian) are pronounced as in German. Icelandic sometimes uses diacritics to mark diphthongs: Á = Sindarin AI, AU = Sindarin El.
4. Presumably, Orcs are too stupid to bother with such calligraphic sophistications.
5. All Scandinavian languages pronounce Y= German Ü and J = Quenya Y.
6. Professor Åke Ohlmarks (a linguist who died a few years ago) was a very fast and very sloppy translator. He is known for some remarkable feats, like translating the Koran into Swedish without knowing Arabic (he used an English translation as source material). It is hard to understand how he was able to dupe Swedish publishers for such a long time. The Ohlmarks LotR translation is still printed, despite its lousy quality, and I look forward to the day when a new Swedish translation is commissioned (preferably to Roland Adlerbert, who did a good job with *The Silmarillion).*
7. I have given Norse names to some Northron NPCs originating from the Mirkwood area (e.g., Arn and Wulfr in the "Pale Riders" adventure in *The Kin-strife* module).

Product Review

Northwestern Middle-earth Gazetteer
(Middle-earth Campaign Atlas #4002)
by Mark Rabuck
Iron Crown Enterprises, 1993

The *Northwestern Middle-earth Gazetteer* is a work of both synthesis and transition for Iron Crown's *MERP* line. It inaugurates a new scries of products "intended to serve as the glue for all the background and adventure material presented in the more focused campaign, fortress, city, and adventure modules (3)." In many ways, the *Gazetteer* is a superior replacement to the old *Middle-earth Adventure Guidebook* (#ME2200), but it also quite obviously marks a significant shift in ICE's publication strategy (as articulated by Pete Fenlon in *OH I:* 3—6), particularly in its new emphasis on the description of political "realms." The hundred and fifty-nine pages of this atlas bring together and organize information concerning geography, societal groupings, settlement patterns, and trade routes which has been developed through or expanded from previous *MERP* publications.

An important departure from previous endeavors is a greater flexibility towards the descriptive material. By casting the atlas in the fictive guise of a "found manuscript" — just as Tolkien presented his own works as translations from *The Red Book of Westmarch* — the author and editors of this *Gazetteer* have created an opportunity for future revision and expansion of its contents. The principal *dramatis persona* whose fictive presence and voice frames the *Gazetteer* is Camagal of Minas Ithil, a loremaster who compiled the *Pelrandir Permellon* (S. The Vagabond's Guide) in the aftermath of the Great Plague. Because of its fictive author's historical limitations and ethnographic bias, "some material is undoubtedly inaccurate (5)." Notwithstanding ICE's healthy concern to keep the avenues of change and improvement open for the future, the present edition of the *Gazetteer* is a *tour de force* of what ICE does best — area description — and it is a fitting culmination to a ten year effort to create the necessary "infrastructure" for a richly detailed campaign setting.

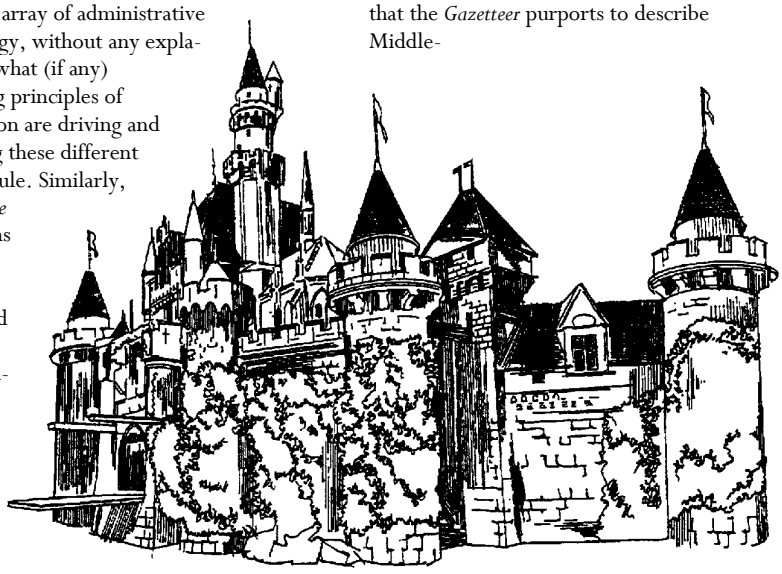
The greatest strength of the *Gazetteer* lies in the fact that its real author, Mark Rabuck,
has succeeded in delivering a concise and synchronic "big picture" of northwestern Middle-earth as it might have been in TA 1640. This is especially true of his realm descriptions, which are both brief enough to read at a glance and essential enough to avoid superficiality. A judicious selection of standardized demographic statistics for each of the realms or individual settlements described permits the reader a clear and immediate sense of the *scale* of things in Middle-earth. Such quantitative comparison makes it possible to judge just how big — say — a "big" city population or military force might be in relation to its immediate surroundings. The resulting overall coherence, combined with an attention to particulars, should make the *Gazetteer* of interest to an audience broader than that of the gaming community.

The greatest weakness of Rabuck's presentation is the lack of an adequate interpretive framework for making sense of much the information he has gathered for us. While the *Gazetteer* contains a section intended to "provide the reader with a cultural backdrop against which to view the specifics presented earlier on realms and sites (125)," the panoramic treatment of history, geology, politics, religion, technology, and trade that follows attempts to cover too much territory in too little space, leaving the reader with more (and often quite valuable) description, but no greater penetrating analysis of the phenomena so described.

This problem shows itself most clearly in the categorization of forms of political rule and in the typology of settlement sites. In the realm descriptions we are confronted with a blinding (at least for this reviewer) array of administrative terminology, without any explanation of what (if any) underlying principles of organization are driving and generating these different forms of rule. Similarly, *quantitative* distinctions between villages, towns, and cities are not accompanied by *qualitative* distinctions clarifying whether such settlement categories imply a particular political form. Moreover, many differences which *do* appear to be significant are never explained or further developed. For example, while the northern realms of the Duncdain are said to be "feudal" in origin, the South-kingdom is supposed to contain certain "constitutional" elements (31) — why this difference, and what these elements are, is never elaborated upon.

At times, the terminology that *is* employed to describe the realms seems to be contradictory in character. The jurisdictional spheres of province and fief are freely interchangeable (31, 33, 35, 38, etc.), even though historically in the real world they signify diametrically opposed forms of political organization. Similarly, agricultural laborers in the purportedly "feudal" realm of Arthedain are referred to as "tenants" (20, 21), even though feudalism (conventionally understood) creates very different relationships of subordination. The point of these criticisms is not to be nit-picky, but rather to ask whether the author himself has a coherent perspective to offer in the description of these realms. In other words, I am suggesting that if Rabuck (or ICE) do, in fact, possess a truly integrated perspective on the "why" as well as the "what" of the realms of northwestern Middle-earth (and they may very well), then it has remained either unspoken or inadequately communicated to the reader.

A second weakness (or, rather, drawback) to the *Gazetteer* lies in the peculiarities of the temporal setting in which it is placed. Although the choice of the 1640's as a setting is common to nearly all of ICE's publications to date, its inability to provide a balanced perspective on the *whole* of the Third Age is particularly highlighted by the scope which the *Atlases of Middle-earth* series intends to provide. To begin with, the fact that the *Gazetteer* purports to describe Middle-



earth in the aftermath of the greatest disaster of the Third Age (the Great Plague) means that many of the population figures (as well as some of the political organization) will be highly "abnormal" and therefore uncharacteristic of other eras during this Age (often necessitating *significant* revisions for a gamemaster wishing to set his or her campaign elsewhere in time). Moreover, its temporal setting rules out descriptions of realms which are no longer (or not yet) in existence by the 1640's. An alternative to this strategy would have been to offer a description of each realm *at its height* (or at least its average), and then to include a concise account of the changes it underwent during the course of its history. Of course, such an alternative would have detracted from some of the particulars of 1640 which give the realm descriptions much of their texture.

A third and final weakness of the *Gazetteer* is its inclusion of a marginal section entitled "Other Groups," which gives brief descriptions of races or individual creatures whose mode of existence does not constitute a "realm." Many of these groups (e.g., balrogs, dragons, wizards, undead, etc.) simply do not belong here, since they are more than adequately described in the *Creatures of Middle-earth* (#8005) and *Lords of Middle-earth* (#8002-8004) supplements. The brief descriptions of them which do appear are too brief or superficial to add any value to the *Gazetteer,* and in any case take away space which could have been used on a much-needed realm description of Dorwinion (Rabuck lumps the Dorwinrim with the Easterlings, *pace* Joe Martin's claim in *River Running* (#8114) that they are ruled by a "Realmmaster" (5)).

As for unintended omissions, the *Gazetteer* lacks a site reference for the haven of Pelargir (although there is a section on it in the Lebennin entry). As for minor errata, the beacon towers of Gondor are said to have been constructed early in the Third Age, rather than by the later Stewards as Tolkien says (33). The Daen Coentis are said to have sworn their oath to Elendil rather than Isildur (39). Lond Ernil is (as usual) often referred to as Dol Amroth before 1981 (138). The Barrow-wights of the Tyrn Gorthad are said to have been Edain spirits, whereas Tolkien states that they were evil spirits (i.e., Maiar of some sort) out of Angmar and Rhudaur (22). Finally, the political leaders of Calenardhon in 1640 are given identical names to those established by Castamir during the Kin-strife (34).

As for the presentation of the module itself, the only seeming flaw is an annoying tendency to capitalize all political terminology, even when referring to generic categories (e.g., "a King" instead of "a king"). Also, the capitalization format ICE appears to have adopted is that found in "Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age" *(The Silmarillion:* 285—304), rather than that appearing in *The Lord of the Rings* (e.g., Gondor as the "South Kingdom," rather than as the "South-kingdom"). The rationale for this procedure is unclear, since on the one hand the LotR version is supposed to be the official, "published" version, and on the other hand because ICE claim to be basing their publications on *The Lord of the Rings,* rather than on *The Silmarillion.*

The *Northwestern Middle-earth Gazetteer* is an ambitious undertaking and, despite its weaknesses and necessary incompleteness, it is a valuable reference tool for game referees and players alike. Its systematic treatment of realms and geography may prove to be of interest to non-gamers as well, combining some of the better elements of Karen Wynn Fonstad and George Foster, the former of whom appears to have been a consultant in the production of the supplement (1).

Reviewer: Chris Seeman

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MIDDLE-EARTH GAMING: 1982-1993

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This is an updated version of the bibliography we began to compile in OH 1. *It includes numerous additions from various game magazines courtesy of Steven Del Toro. We encourage you all to continue informing us of anything new that might turn up. Subsequent updates of this list will appear when we have enough new material.*

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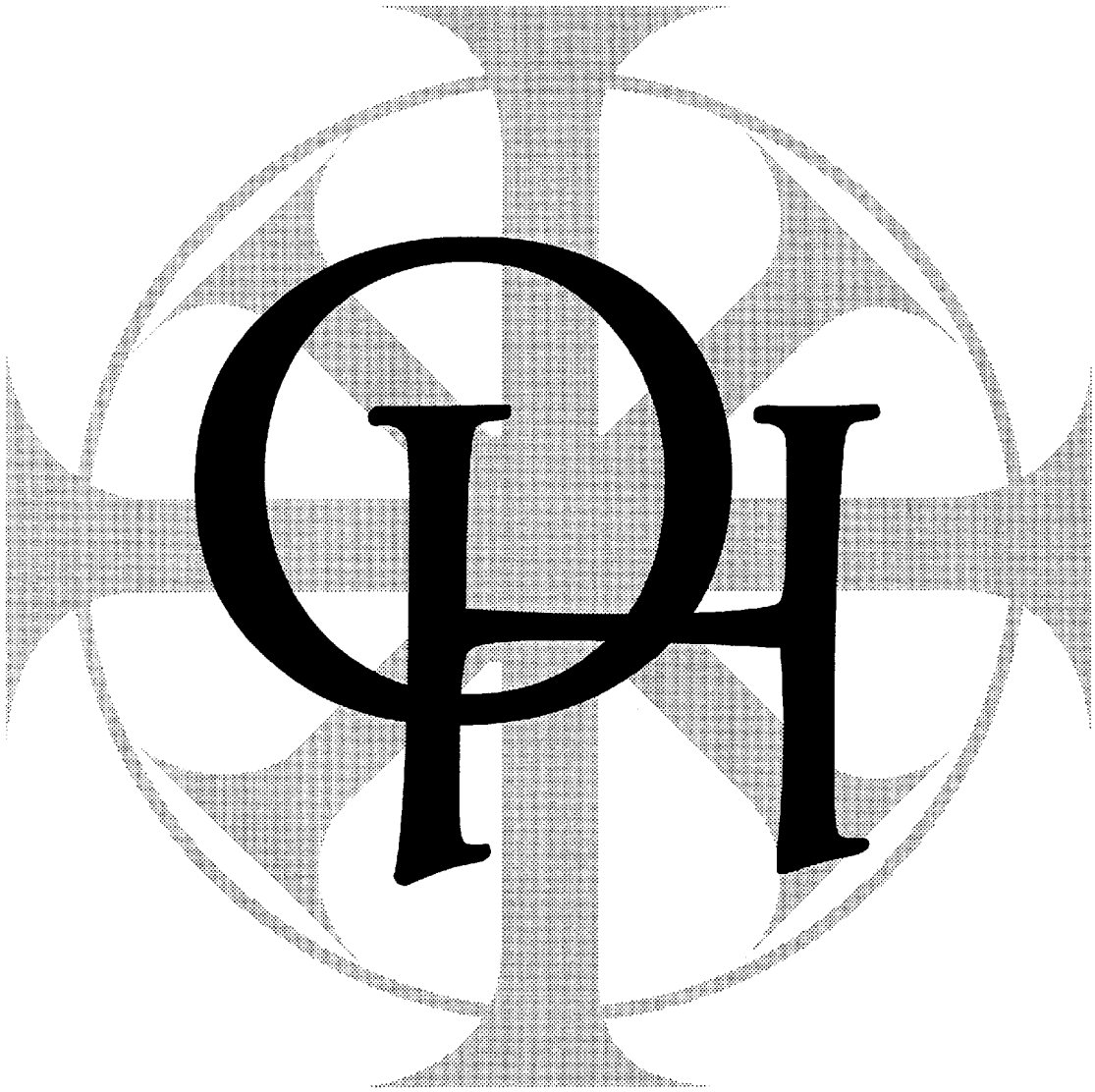

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